

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

BALTIC SEA REGION ROUND-UP REPORT 2022



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ABOUT THE TASK FORCE AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS (TF-THB)

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) is an overall political forum for regional intergovernmental cooperation. The Members of the CBSS are the ten States of the Baltic Sea Region: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden, as well as the European Union. The CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) is a dedicated expert group that works against trafficking in human beings in the Baltic Sea Region.

EXPERTS AND STRUCTURE OF THE TF-THB

The TF-THB is composed of government representatives from the CBSS Member States. It holds regular sessions and is supported by the TF-THB Unit at the CBSS Secretariat in Stockholm. The chair of the TF-THB rotates among the Member States on an annual basis following the CBSS Presidency. The current Chair is Germany.

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FOREWORD

The Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) at the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat (CBSS) has since its establishment in 2006 assumed the position as the leading international stakeholder against human trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region.

Gathering relevant ministry experts from ten member states in our region, the group consolidates expertise from the national level with the international level, and the cooperation ranges from practical exchange on preventing, identifying, and countering human trafficking for all forms of exploitation to collaboration on direct anti-trafficking projects.

The strength of the TF-THB is the composition of the group and the ability to rapidly adapt and respond to emerging human trafficking related challenges and new developments in the region and beyond, such as the Russian war in Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine has resulted in a serious humanitarian crisis leaving those fleeing the war under an increased risk of being exploited in human trafficking – especially women and children. The Baltic Sea Region alone has registered over 2,7 million displaced persons from Ukraine since the start of the war and the number is likely to grow.

This report provides an overview of initiatives and projects in our member states that have contributed particularly to preventing trafficking in human beings. Moreover, the new edition of the report has the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine as a thematic focus and presents actions taken by our member states against trafficking in human beings in the context of the crisis and refugee flows. The solidarity with Ukrainian refugees in our member states have not only been demonstrated through the initiatives taken on a governmental level but is clearly reflected in the actions taken by non-governmental organisations and the private sector as well.

The fate of displaced persons, and how we respond to their immediate and long-term needs, concerns all of us. The measures developed in response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis must encompass both a gender-sensitive and human rights-based approach, recognizing the specific needs of both human trafficking victims and vulnerable persons under the risk of being exploited.

Edi Mujaj

Senior Adviser for the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings



THEMATIC ISSUE:
UKRAINE

ADDRESSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION IN LIGHT OF THE UKRAINIAN HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The Russian war in Ukraine has increased the risk of human trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region. The displacement of more than 2,7 million Ukrainians in the region has required a unified response from the CBSS member states and the TF-THB to prevent the exploitation of arriving refugees and to assist those who have been victimized in the conflict zone or during transit. To address the needs of the refugees, in particular the most vulnerable, increased attention needs to be paid to their long-term protection and integration.

The ongoing war against Ukraine has devastating consequences to the Ukrainian people. Being the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War, with over seven million Ukrainians currently displaced and registered across the continent¹, the Baltic Sea Region is faced with a situation that has required immediate action and the activation of all services available by both the institutions and civil society.

DISPLACED PERSONS UNDER A PARTICULAR RISK OF BEING EXPLOITED

Armed conflict harms not only individuals directly affected by it but will also have an impact on the societies for an unforeseeable time. Displaced persons who are forced to leave their families, homes, networks, income sources, and their overall social environment, are under the immediate risk of experiencing trauma and may become easy prey for human traffickers and organized crime in their country of origin, during transit or in the country of destination.²

The grave circumstances that the refugees are in forces them to make risky decisions not applicable to normal conditions, exacerbating their vulnerabilities. Although being a threat to all displaced persons, armed conflicts and post-conflict situations pose a particularly great threat for women, children and minorities who are vulnerable to discrimination and other forms of violence already in the absence of direct armed conflict. For instance, reports concerning missing and unaccompanied children have been

numerous³ while the risk of sexual exploitation, forced labour, illegal adoptions and exploitation in armed conflict within the Ukrainian borders has been aggravated.⁴

The TF-THB has functioned as a hub for direct information exchange between the member states, particularly on the issue of best practices in reaching refugees with the correct information when they are entering the Baltic Sea Region.

The activation of the European Union Temporary Protection Directive, has managed to mitigate some of the immediate hurdles that could have arisen in connection to large scale refugee flows into the EU. In parallel the TF-THB has redirected its priorities to include or directly address the ongoing humanitarian crisis. The TF-THB has functioned as a hub for direct information exchange between the member states, particularly on the issue of best practices in reaching refugees with the correct information when they are entering the Baltic Sea Region.



³ ICMPD (2022). Policy Brief: What governments need to know about vulnerability to trafficking among the people fleeing the war in Ukraine, 7.

⁴ UNODC (2022): Conflict in Ukraine: Key Evidence on Risks of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants.

The member states, nevertheless, need to prepare for the war in Ukraine, and the aftermath, being a long battle. Traumatized and exploited refugees should be entitled to protection and support, regardless of whether the authorities consider them to be presumed victims of human trafficking or not. Having a victim perspective as a guiding principle will not only increase the assistance to vulnerable people in the region but is also likely to make the work against human trafficking for all forms of exploitation more effective.



EU TEMPORARY PROTECTION DIRECTIVE

The Temporary Protection Directive, which was adopted following the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, was triggered for the first time by the Council in response to the unprecedented Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 to offer quick and effective assistance to people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

Since 24 February 2022, Russia's military invasion of Ukraine has created a situation of mass arrivals of displaced people from Ukraine unable to return to their homes. Due to the scale of estimated arrivals, the European Commission identified a clear risk that the asylum systems of EU countries would be unable to process applications within the deadlines set. This would negatively affect the efficiency of national asylum processes and adversely affect the rights of people applying for international protection.

Following the call of the home affairs ministers on 2 March 2022, the Commission rapidly proposed to activate the Temporary Protection Directive. On 4 March 2022, the Council unanimously adopted the Directive, giving those fleeing war in Ukraine the right to temporary protection.

Source: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system/temporary-protection_en

¹ UNHCR Operational Data Portal, September 20, 2022.

² United Nations Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. A/ HRC/32/41, 18-22.

THE LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF TRAUMATISATION

Refugees, victims of sexual violence in armed conflicts and victims of human trafficking may have experienced events and subjected to crimes resulting in trauma. As a result of trauma, individuals may undergo difficulties in functioning and expressing certain emotions in their daily lives and can find it particularly challenging to memorize the events that likely caused their trauma. This reality might severely impact the possibilities of individuals to integrate to their new societies – if a legal status enabling a long-term integration is offered to them. This can be further affected by factors such as age, gender, past experiences, cultural context and the presence or absence of social support.⁵

- As a social worker meeting children with past experiences of armed conflict and individuals with a refugee background, the outcome of any trauma is very much affected by previous and current factors. Did they experience any harmful or dangerous events before fleeing their homes? What happened to them during their transit and on route? Do they have social support or family structures in their new country? Generally speaking, these experiences may strongly affect their possibilities to concentrate in school or control certain emotions which can be difficult enough as a child even without trauma present. We must have this in mind when meeting these individuals, says Ms. Louise Rasmusson, a social worker and school counsellor in Stockholm, Sweden.

The impacts of trauma may not just harm the individual directly affected by it, but the waves will sooner or later also hit others, such as their children.

- The life of children whose parents have experiences of armed conflicts can of course vary drastically. However, trauma can hinder the ability of the parent to be present. The examples can range from not having the capacity to be an active and supporting parent, to not being able to structure routines which are very important for children to have, as they can contribute to a feeling of safety.

Against this background and the legal frameworks in place, a human rights perspective and a victim-centered approach should be in the center of all institutional responses affecting vulnerable individuals residing in the country, including victims of human trafficking and refugees. The support is particularly important at the local level. Moreover, the importance of counselling cannot be disregarded.

- The access to counselling and support, for both adults and children, can be very limited considering the great demand, and the great need for it. Especially for newly arrived migrants. Additional and earmarked resources would make a tremendous difference. Social workers, and other professionals, who meet individuals with potential trauma, work very hard to help them, but the resources are not there. We need to remember that assisting individuals with trauma will make their integration into our societies easier socially, in schools and in the labour market. Even though assistance and support is crucial from a human rights and victim perspective, it will also benefit our societies as such.

⁵ European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation – EUROJUST. (2022) Documenting international crimes and human rights violations for accountability purposes: Guidelines for civil society organisations.

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

Prosecutions of war crimes in the aftermath of the wars in the former Yugoslavia involved cases of sexual violence that included elements that may warrant considering them as trafficking for sexual slavery. In one case, the court documented that a group of women were segregated and repeatedly raped by the captors and coerced into performing domestic chores. Occasionally, they were also coerced into sexual intercourse with others, and eventually sold to other criminals.

UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons – in the context of armed conflict 2018

Women, children and minorities are especially vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation during conflicts and in post-conflict societies. The acts of sexual exploitation and violence can be extremely harmful to the victim psychologically and physically. Moreover, the exploitation and violence often stigmatizes the victim both during and in the absence of armed conflict, which can lead to an exclusion from the community. As a result, sexual violence is often under-reported, making it hard for the victims to receive assistance.⁶

In light of the war and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, the CBSS member states have, within the frame of the TF-THB cooperation, reported a number of cases indicating a likely increase in human trafficking for all forms of exploitation - with an emphasis on sexual exploitation. Examples reported by the CBSS member states range from criminals and traffickers standing at the border crossings and in central stations in the large city areas, with the purpose of recruiting Ukrainian women arriving with their children, to data showing an increase in Ukrainian women being exploited in prostitution or advertised online.

⁶ United Nations Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. A/HRC/32/41, 4-5; UNODC (2018) Trafficking in Persons in the Context of Armed Conflict 2018.

The use of social media channels, such as Facebook, Telegram and Viber has further increased the risk of Ukrainians being recruited and exploited by human traffickers for sexual exploitation.⁷

Analysis of online traffic since the start of the humanitarian crisis has shown huge spikes in online searches – across multiple languages and countries - for explicit content and sexual services from Ukrainian women and girls. For example, global search traffic for “Ukrainian porn” increased 600% since the start of the humanitarian crisis, while searches for “Ukrainian escorts” increased 200%.

- OSCE Recommendations on enhancing efforts to identify and mitigate risks of trafficking in human beings online as a result of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine (2022).

Acknowledging the gender dimension means acknowledging that two out of three victims of trafficking globally are women and girls.⁸ As the overwhelming majority, estimated 90%⁹, of the Ukrainian refugees are women and children, states should allocate resources corresponding to the human trafficking exploitation forms commonly targeting these groups. For instance, having a gender-sensitive approach is key for all stakeholders dealing with integration or refugee reception in the Baltic Sea Region.

It is the responsibility of the Baltic Sea Region states to assist and protect both those individuals victimized and traumatized by sexual violence in on-going armed conflicts, as well as protecting those refugees arriving who may be particularly vulnerable to being trafficked or re-trafficked.

⁷ UNODC (2022): Conflict in Ukraine: Key Evidence on Risks of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants.

⁸ CBSS Handbook for embassies and diplomatic missions on how to assist and protect victims of human trafficking, 2022, 22.

⁹ UNODC (2022): Conflict in Ukraine: Key Evidence on Risks of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants.

FOCUSING ON LONG-TERM SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION TO PREVENT (RE)VICTIMISATION

The recognition of the gender-dimensions of armed conflict, and human trafficking, should be reflected comprehensively in policies, including anti-trafficking referral mechanisms and long-term integration strategies for refugees set up by the states. Although under a particular risk of sexual exploitation, displaced Ukrainian women are at risk of being subjected to forced labour or related exploitative labour conditions during their transit or in the destination countries as well. Vulnerabilities, including the lack of language skills, economic challenges and low employment skills, should be recognized, despite the Ukrainian refugees having an access to the labour market due to application of the European Union Temporary Protection Directive¹⁰ or national instruments that provide similar rights in the Baltic Sea Region.

The TF-THB, at an early stage, managed to issue recommendations on the long-term integration of refugees and labour migrants, based on the CBSS roadmap developed as a result of the refugee crisis of 2015-2016.

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The recommendations underline the need to adapt labour measures, and language and integration programmes so that they take into consideration personal hardships, the impact of trauma and possible experiences of exploitation of the refugees. The strength of the cooperation within TF-THB is the ability to assume a flexible approach to the issue of human trafficking, and adapt to ongoing developments, such as the war against Ukraine, without scaling down on a human rights-based approach in this work.

¹⁰ ICMPD (2022). Policy Brief: What governments need to know about vulnerability to trafficking among the people fleeing the war in Ukraine, 6.

¹¹ Council of the Baltic Sea States, Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings -CBSS, TF-THB. (2018) Road map for integration of victims of human trafficking among migrants in Finland, Germany, and Sweden.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND A CBSS ROAD MAP FOR SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM LABOUR INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS.

1. Target refugees with information in a language they understand, informing them on the risks of being exploited in Trafficking in Human Beings, as well as their legal rights.
2. Establish multi-disciplinary and operative networks, consisting of local stakeholders such as migration agencies, police authorities, social services, unions, state employment agencies, employers, counselling centers and services as well as local THB focal points.
3. Adapt labour integration measures to include a clear trauma-sensitive focus that includes counselling, and ensure that labour integration measures are tailored according to the persons needs.
4. Adapt the requirements, pace and the structure of language courses in integration programs to the persons situation, needs and traumatic experiences.
5. Medical assistance should be disassociated from the legal status of victims.

Source: <https://cbss.org/2022/03/29/labour-integration-of-refugees/>

CBSS MEMBER STATES ACTIVITIES TO PREVENT THE EXPLOITATION OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

The Baltic Sea Region alone has recorded over 2,7 million displaced Ukrainians since the start of the humanitarian crisis.¹²

Although the available statistics vary in terms of data on refugees registered for Temporary Protection, or similar national protection schemes, the overall figures speak for themselves. The magnitude of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine concerns the entire Baltic Sea Region.

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) member states have during the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine demonstrated a readiness and solidarity to receive displaced Ukrainians which has not only been reflected in the number of displaced persons received, but also in both the institutional responses and the number of initiatives from the civil society and private sector in respective state. Poland alone has registered over six million border crossings from Ukraine into Poland since the start of the war, and almost 1,4 million Ukrainian refugees have been recorded in the country to date.¹³

The majority of the CBSS member states on an early stage exchanged best practices through the TF-THB cooperation on reaching newly arrived refugees with adequate information on help and available services, at the borders and throughout the countries. Apart from developing hands-on material with information on the risks of human trafficking, the member states have also allocated funding for existing helplines, NGOs and state agencies in order to include Ukrainian displaced persons as a target group and support national helplines to handle the increased number of calls concerning human trafficking.

¹² The data reflects those displaced persons recorded by authorities and may not include Ukrainians who have entered or reside in the region without being registered by authorities.

¹³ UNHCR Operational Data Portal, September 20, 2022.

As the specialised human trafficking groups can work quite independently, it is important that the people working with the topic are driven and cooperative



DENMARK

- **To date, approximately 34.000 displaced Ukrainians have been recorded in Denmark.**
- Denmark, on an early stage, developed relevant information material targeting Ukrainian refugees:
 - Leaflets with QR-codes informing about the risks of human trafficking, in Ukrainian, Russian and English were developed by the Danish Centre against Human Trafficking and were published on relevant state agency websites and distributed throughout train stations in the country. To ensure a relatable language and tone in the information, Ukrainian survivors of human trafficking were involved in drafting the leaflets.
 - A new short easy-to-read leaflet including indicators of human trafficking has been produced for collaborators and frontline personnel, for instance in job centers, where Ukrainians register themselves.
 - The Danish Ministry of Employment developed the JobguideUkraine.dk and the information material Your path to a job in Denmark, in order to ensure trustworthy information on how to find a job. The information includes the importance of having an employment contract and getting familiar with the standard salary levels for the job position applied, prior to agreeing to an employment.
- The Danish parliament adopted the new Special Act which came into force on 17 March 2022. As a result of the new legislation, it is possible for displaced Ukrainians to apply for a residence permit. According to the Special Act, when the residence permit is processed, Ukrainians are accommodated in asylum centers or can reside privately, with family or friends. While an application for a residence permit under the Special Act is processed, the person concerned has a right to work in Denmark and has access to healthcare services. Persons displaced from Ukraine are not systematically registered when entering Denmark. However, they are registered when applying for a temporary residence permit under the Special Act.
- Denmark has in addition looked at the technological aspects of the war. The Danish Centre against Human Trafficking, jointly with the cyber police units and financial institutions, initiated a meeting with tech companies such as Microsoft and Meta. At this meeting, the measures on how these companies could assist in detecting and preventing human trafficking following the war in Ukraine were discussed.

ESTONIA

- **To date, approximately 55.000 displaced Ukrainians have been recorded in Estonia.**
- The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine has engaged all levels of the Estonian society. One of the early initiatives included Estonian phone companies providing Ukrainian refugees with phone cards to be able to communicate with relatives in Ukraine free of charge. At an early stage of the humanitarian crisis, Estonian authorities mapped various ways and job sectors to employ Ukrainian refugees in, such as in the agricultural sector. This was carried out in close cooperation between state agencies, NGOs and the private sector.
- Since the start of the Russian war in Ukraine and the following humanitarian crisis, Estonian authorities have jointly activated local coordination to assist arriving refugees by opening shelters, coordinating and transporting refugees to the appropriate housing and activate institutional assistance mechanisms.

- Leaflets with information on the risks of human trafficking, as well as information on available assistance, have been disseminated to refugees in Ukrainian. The Estonian Police and the Social Insurance Board have been the key focal points of this work.
- Volunteers have received information and training on human trafficking, to be aware of possible exploiters and perpetrators intending to recruit Ukrainian women into human trafficking. Short films have been produced to volunteers on what to look for and where to turn to report suspected cases of human trafficking.

FINLAND

- **To date, approximately 38.000 displaced Ukrainians have been recorded in Finland.**
- The Finnish Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking have alongside other authorities concentrated its efforts to preventative measures and wide information sharing warning Ukrainian refugees on the risks of exploitation and human trafficking. This has also emphasized information about the services and assistance Ukrainians are entitled to, where to receive the assistance and correct information about the rules and regulations of the working life in Finland. Information has been distributed in English, Ukrainian and Russian for example through social media. Unaccompanied children living in the group homes will get needed information also in languages they are able to understand.
- The Finnish Immigration Service has introduced information in Ukrainian and in Russian language. Information is available in the internet but info leaflets are also distributed in airports, harbour and in reception centers and by reception centres for those who arrange their accommodation themselves. In addition to other information, the leaflets talk about THB and risks and rights and where to get more information and help if needed.
- A guide "As a foreign employee in Finland" in Ukrainian and Russian has been distributed widely, i.g. at harbour, airport, reception centres as well as in social media and via different networks. A poster of the guide has been published online, and various actors have been asked to print and display it. A leaflet including information on the principles of Finnish working life has also been produced.
- The Finnish Occupational Health and Safety authorities have given a presentation about Finnish labour legislation at a seminar for Ukrainian refugees organised by the Ukrainian Association in Finland on worker's rights and how to get help. Recording of the event in Ukrainian language is available in Youtube.
- Authorities and non-profit organisations formed a network "Ukrainians and working life". The network aims to strengthen cooperation and improve information sharing between different organisations, and thus contribute to the safe and seamless integration of Ukrainians into the labour market. The Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment in Uusimaa also shares information regularly to a vast network of NGOs and other organisations helping Ukrainians in the area.
- The Federation of Agricultural Employers has compiled a "checklist for secure recruitment". It presents recommended principles when using foreign labour and information about recruiting, orientation, abuse and contact information if problems occur. The checklist is available online.

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy has published written instructions and two videos (in Ukrainian, Russian, English, Finnish and Swedish) for those fleeing Ukraine. (Ukrainasta tuleville suunnatut ohjeet työnteosta Suomessa - YouTube). Another of the videos advises those receiving temporary protection on employment and says that fair working conditions apply to everyone in Finland. The second focuses in particular on the prevention of exploitation and human trafficking. In addition

to the authorities, the videos have been widely distributed to networks that help Ukrainians to get the message to the grassroots level. The central government authorities responsible for coordinating the work against trafficking in human beings in Finland has organized regular meetings for a wide group of authorities in order to handle the crisis and prevent the risks of human trafficking.

GERMANY

- **To date, approximately one million displaced Ukrainians have been recorded in Germany.**
- Together with the federal states, the municipalities, civil society and European partners, the Federal Government has been working intensively since the beginning of the war to counter exploitation and human trafficking, especially of women and children.
- The Federal Government of Germany has set up an online central support portal for the Ukrainian refugees, called germany4ukraine.de. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) has in particular also included information on basic labour rights, access to the labour market and entitlements to social benefits. This information is also online on the Ministry's website. Counselling centres on labour rights and assistance in cases of potential exploitation and trafficking risks are also included online. The Portal is also available as an App.
- The trade union-based "Arbeit und Leben" counselling centre for labour rights in Berlin has published multilingual flyers for Ukrainian refugees with important information on labour rights to be distributed through counselling centres and other channels. Additionally, counselling centres in place for all forms of exploitation, sexual as well as labour exploitation, provide assistance upon and after arrival.
- The German NGO Network against Trafficking in Human Beings (KOK) and the BMAS funded Service Center against Labour Exploitation, Forced Labour and Human Trafficking provide flyers and information material on the risks of trafficking as well as support and advice services available to victims of trafficking. These flyers are being distributed at their websites but also in train stations and other points of first arrival. Material is also available in various languages.
- The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is providing 53.000 EUR in additional funding to the KOK in order to address the situation and risks for persons fleeing Ukraine. This includes a special project surveying the specialized counseling centers about their experiences regarding the last months. It aims to identify the needs of refugees as well as of the specialized counseling centers and thereby contributes in further developing the program to prevent trafficking in human beings. Additionally, KOK will further inform about support offers to sensitize stakeholders working with refugee support.
- Employees of the Federal Police, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and aid organizations receive regular training in identifying trafficked persons, for example, through programs offered by the German NGO Network against Trafficking in Human Beings (KOK).
- The German government has also made sure to raise awareness on the services of the national helpline "Violence Against Women" (hotline which offers around-the-clock support on 365 days per year). Since May 2022, the services are available with interpretation in Ukrainian.
- Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania offers refugees counselling services, in particular through the specialised counselling centre "CORRECT!", in order to inform them of the potential risks of precarious working situations. The staff of the "CORRECT!" was increased in order to provide services in Ukrainian. There are also facilities for providing care and counselling for victims of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced marriage.

ICELAND

- **To date, approximately one thousand displaced Ukrainians have been recorded in Iceland.**
- Iceland has focused its work on targeting Ukrainian refugees with information on human trafficking. The leaflets have been disseminated by relevant state agencies, especially through reception centers, throughout the country.
- By recognizing the particular vulnerabilities of women and children, Icelandic authorities have put an effort in housing refugees in accommodation provided by the local and national authorities. The purpose has been to avoid a scenario in which women and children are forced to put their trust in private citizens and exploited.
- Leaflets have been developed by the Ministry of Justice, on indicators and risks of human trafficking. They are available in Icelandic, English and Polish.

LATVIA

- **To date, approximately 38.000 displaced Ukrainians have been recorded in Latvia.**
- Latvian state agencies as well as NGOs have published posters and leaflets on human trafficking which have been widely distributed at the border points. Efforts have been made to increase the competence of the border guards to identify human trafficking and recognize the main human trafficking indicators, since the border guards are usually the first point of contact - especially regarding the Ukrainian refugees arriving through Russia.
- There is continuous international cooperation and information exchange among law enforcement. The Latvian Police are monitoring social networks and media for human trafficking related cases, and potential hate crime. The monitoring has included gathering places and hotspots where Ukrainian refugees gather and meet in to its regular patrols. Moreover, the Border Police and the State Police have drafted an algorithm on how to proceed in cases of possible human trafficking among Ukrainian civilians.
- Latvian non-governmental organisations have been organizing trainings on human trafficking indicators, including staff at reception centers. Migration officers that work at the reception centres have also received checklists on human trafficking and instructions on where to turn in case of suspected cases.

LITHUANIA



- **To date, approximately 65.500 displaced Ukrainians have been recorded in Lithuania.**
- Since the start of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, Lithuania has concentrated its efforts on training professionals who may get into contact with Ukrainian refugees and potential victim of human trafficking, such as reception centers. In this context, increased protective measures and security at the entrances have been introduced in order to prevent potential perpetrators to recruit Ukrainian refugees into human trafficking.
- Lithuanian authorities have developed and disseminated leaflets and contact cards on the risks and indicators of human trafficking, including common red flags for volunteers to pay attention to.
- Information and helpline contact for refugees have been advertised through big screens in public places, informing Ukrainian refugees on where they can turn to report recruitment attempts from perpetrators, report direct cases of human trafficking exploitation or receive assistance.
- A part of the state responses to the humanitarian crisis, the Lithuanian Police launched a national action plan and coordination group against human trafficking. This included additional check-ups in areas or environments where possible sexual exploitation can take place.
- The cooperation between NGOs has been intensified during the humanitarian crisis. The Lithuanian NGOs have played a major role in reaching Ukrainian refugees in the country with relevant information through the existing Ukrainian communities.

NORWAY



- **To date, approximately 27.000 displaced Ukrainians have been recorded in Norway.**
- Following a consultation with the Minister of Children and Families, a working group prepared a joint letter sent in April from the relevant ministries to the municipalities. The letter enclosed information on THB and Ukrainian refugees, recommendations that the municipalities should follow to avoid exploitation, and information on assistance that should be provided to possible victims in the short and long term. Municipalities were also addressed with a webinar, organized mid- May, 2022.
- The Coordination Unit for Victims of Human Trafficking (KOM) developed a broad threat assessment with recommendations for action sent to the Ministry of Justice in April, building on input from all relevant actors.
- Information material was developed through a joint effort by several authorities, led by the Directorate of Immigration (UDI). These provided a common message and approach covering all forms of exploitation, including THB. The materials also referred to two NGO helplines, and were distributed and communicated via different authorities' websites, information screens, posters and information leaflets at arrival and reception centres and police districts for registration. See: <https://www.udi.no/krisen-i-ukraina/vare-i-norge/vanlige-spor-smal-og-svar/opplever-du-vold-tvang-eller-press/>
- The police have been particularly active in sharing information. They created a leaflet about registration and residence permits, with warnings to refugees about possible exploitation. Other leaflets about coercion and exploitation were distributed to possible victims by the police THB groups. Other preventive measures included two videos, where police officers address Ukrainian refugees about exploitation, threats, and violence. The films are in Norwegian with Ukrainian subtitles.

See:

<https://www.politiet.no/tjenester/opphold-i-norge-og-asyl/ukraina/informasjonsvideoer-til-ukrainske-flyktninger/>

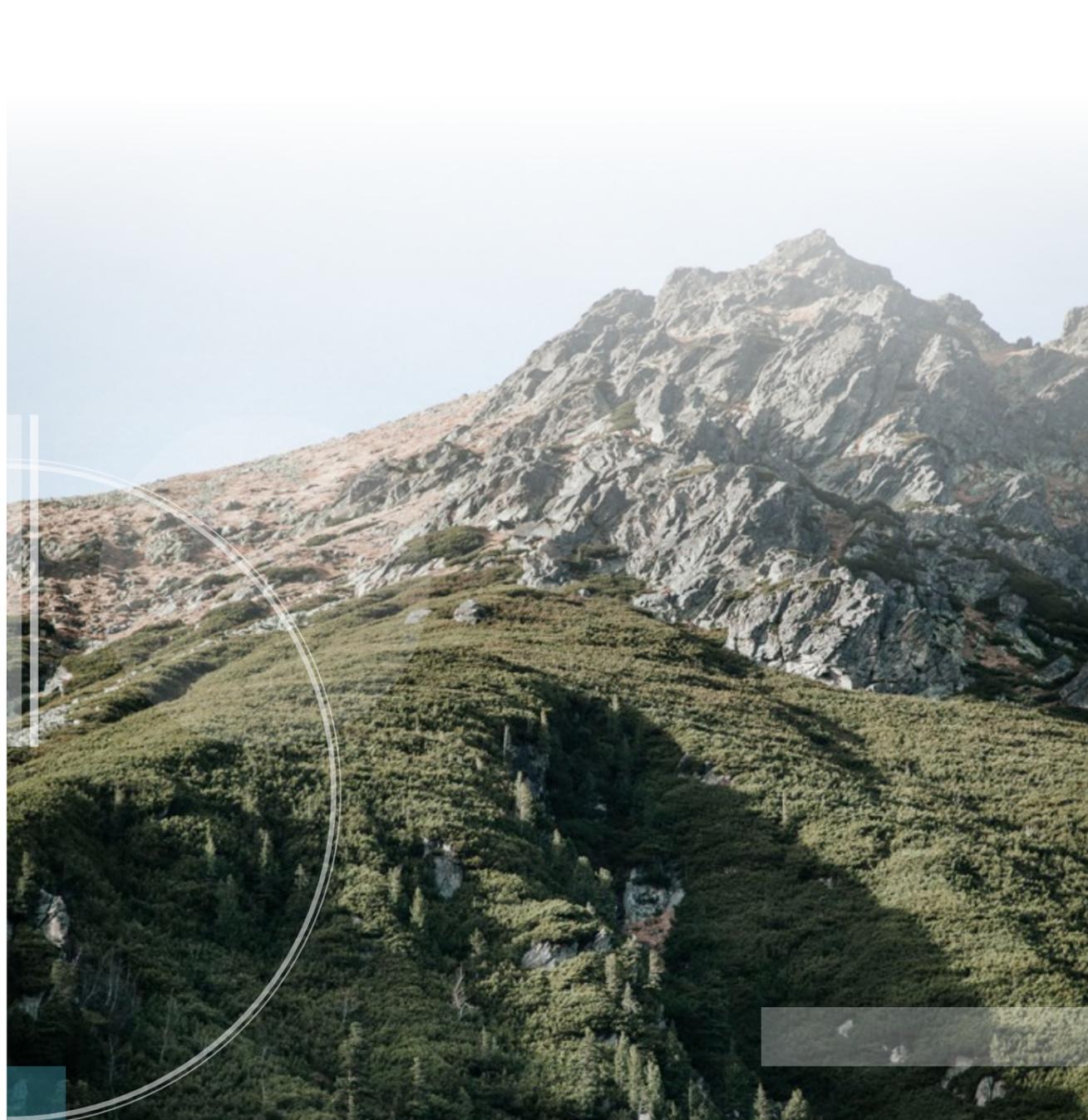
- Registration routines have been enforced. If indicators of exploitation or THB are noted, the presumed victims are offered information on getting assistance.
- Staff members of reception camps received capacity-building support on risks of violence and abuse and how to support vulnerable applicants and families, organized by UDI. Capacity-building was supported by creating separate training modules and programs. The IOM provide training for staff at reception camps in the south-eastern Norway.
- In a meeting on September 7 organized by Human Trafficking Support Oslo, NAV Grünerløkka, all major assistance providers in Oslo discussed their experiences with Ukrainian refugees. No cases of serious exploitation had been identified at this point.

POLAND



- **To date, approximately 1,4 million displaced Ukrainians have been recorded in Poland.**
- Although Poland has since the early stage of the Ukrainian humanitarian crisis taken a heavy burden in receiving Ukrainian displaced persons, the overall engagement from all layers of the Polish society has been highly visible during the year.
- Poland adopted the *Law on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine in Connection with Armed Conflict on the Territory of Ukraine*, which increased the punishment provided by the Criminal Code for committing the crime of human trafficking. The new law means that the trafficking in human beings' crime can lead to a prison sentence of 10-15 years, or a sentence of 25 years of imprisonment.
- Different institutions share information of the situation in shorter intervals. This includes weekly reports of subordinate services, constant contact with the Border Guard, the Police, NGOs and other institutions involved in assistance, in particular with different Voivodeship (regional) Teams. A joint meeting of 16 Voivodeship Teams was organised to exchange information on the current humanitarian crisis, including identified potential victims and presented actions undertaken to counteract trafficking in human beings. As an outcome of the meeting, a number of legal issues concerning the protection of minors were formulated, and were handed over personally at the meeting to the Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Justice.
- The Police and Border Guard officers have intensified the control and inspections regarding persons organizing transports for refugees from the border. Moreover, law enforcement authorities have utilized the national checklists and indicators in place for dealing with adults and minors in suspected human trafficking cases.
- The ongoing information campaign *Do not trust implicitly. Don't become a victim of human trafficking* that is aimed at refugees in Poland was re-activated in the form of a leaflet and poster. A banner containing basic information about the risks of human trafficking and contact details to assistance and help services, has been developed and distributed to all institutions involved in work relating to anti-trafficking and refugee reception.
- An alerting text-message containing the number of the *National Intervention and Consultation Centre for Victims of Human Trafficking* and a special police hotline (providing information on human trafficking and sexual crimes, sexual exploitation of children and child pornography) has been activated and regularly reaches the phones of people crossing the Polish-Ukrainian border.

- The Ministry of the Interior and Administration, in cooperation with the Police, has developed a mechanism for screening organisations, foreign entities and individuals wishing to provide volunteer or humanitarian aid to Ukrainian refugees.
- A handbook for judicial and law enforcement authorities, as well as other bodies involved in combating trafficking in human beings, on how to proceed in trafficking cases has been finalized.
- External training for candidates for consuls, for directors and employees of educational institutions and social workers was carried out in the Mazovia region (including approximately 200 people) In addition, a conference was organised on May 30, 2022 in cooperation with the Border Guard, Police, Prosecutors and NGOs in Koszalin, at the Border Guard Central Training Centre. The training sessions were also attended by representatives of the Voivodeship Teams from the regions bordering to Ukraine, which have been particularly burdened in the context of refugee reception.



SWEDEN

- **To date, approximately 45.000 displaced Ukrainians have been recorded in Sweden.**
- During the first months of the Ukrainian humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, the Swedish Government allocated additional funds to the Swedish Gender Equality Agency which has the governmental assignment to coordinate the work against prostitution and human trafficking in Sweden.
- Sweden has greatly increased its humanitarian support due to the invasion, pushed for a coordinated response and also provided targeted support to the UN's migration agency International Organization for Migration for efforts against human trafficking in Ukraine and neighboring countries.
- Sweden has in different forums highlighted the importance to enhance efforts against the demand to ensure that people fleeing the war do not end up in exploitation and abuse. During the French EU presidency, Sweden and France under the lead of their respective ambassadors against trafficking, organized a joint event in Brussels "A Responsibility to Protect - How to best prevent and combat trafficking in the EU and its neighborhood with a focus on Ukraine together with the OSCE. The event focused on the importance of targeting the demand. During this year's opening of the UN General Assembly, on September 23, 2022, Sweden hosted a side event with a focus on human trafficking and Ukraine, which is organized by the OSCE and the UN Special Representative against sexual violence in conflict. The purpose of the side event was to promote the implementation of recommendations and decided actions on human trafficking resulting from the invasion of Ukraine and to secure political will for continued coordinated efforts carried out by the UN, OSCE, EU and other stakeholders.
- The Swedish Gender Equality Agency developed a website specifically for Ukraine, only a few weeks into the humanitarian crisis. The website includes information in several languages, including Ukrainian, about the risks of human trafficking and where refugees exploited in human trafficking can turn to. The website became the most widely disseminated and visited information effort in the history of the agency. In addition to information targeting refugees directly, the agency also developed information to professionals who may encounter Ukrainian refugees. This includes a telephone number run by the agency to which local stakeholders and national authorities can call in order to receive method support in cases of suspected human trafficking. The Agency has developed leaflets which have been disseminated among the 290 Swedish municipalities, among NGOs and at reception centers.
- The Swedish Gender Equality Agency and the Council of the Baltic Sea States will in cooperation launch an international awareness raising campaign informing refugees and labour migrants on the risks of human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, and information on what to think of prior to agreeing to a job in Sweden. A film will be developed containing Ukrainian, Romanian, Bulgarian and Polish individuals currently working in Sweden, giving their peers tips on what to think of before agreeing to a job. The campaign will be launched in November 2022.
- Information targeting persons fleeing Ukraine directly have also been developed by the Swedish Migration Agency, through their website with mandatory information about the Swedish society - as well as by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, through krisinformation.se.



THE EU ANTI-TRAFFICKING PLAN

In order to address the protection of Ukrainian refugees in the European Union (EU), the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator in cooperation with EU agencies and member states, developed *A Common Anti-Trafficking Plan to address the risks of trafficking in human beings and support potential victims among those fleeing the war in Ukraine* in May 2022.

The plan builds on the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and formulated five main goals:

1. Strengthen **awareness** regarding risks of trafficking in human beings and setting up dedicated **helplines**.
2. Reinforce **prevention** against trafficking in human beings.
3. Enhancing **law enforcement and judicial response** to trafficking in human beings.
4. Improving early identification, support and protection of **human trafficking victims**.
5. Addressing the risks of trafficking in human beings in **non-EU countries**, especially Ukraine and Moldova.

THE TASK FORCE AGAINST THB – HIGHLIGHTS AND JOINT PROJECTS

MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS AS PARTNERS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The media has an important role in how trafficking in human beings is portrayed and understood in the Baltic Sea Region. To support an accurate and compassionate journalism on the topic, the TF-THB initiated project THALIA. Successfully reaching out to journalist, universities and journalism students all across the region, THALIA has become one of the most influential projects of the TF-THB.



First, the framing of human trafficking in the Danish media has changed significantly over the past decade, from mainly covering human trafficking solely as a matter of prostitution and human rights issue for women in 2010 to becoming an issue of migration with security and legal implications in 2019. As such, there has been a development away from a focus on women's 'bodies' to concentrating instead on 'borders' and migration politics.¹

Expanding partnerships in the fight against human trafficking to include stakeholders that can play an important role and make a considerable impact has been a priority for the TF-THB. One of the most recent partnerships has included journalists and journalist students. The reasoning for this has not only been to raise the awareness on the topic of human trafficking but the objective has also been to increase human trafficking media coverage and support a well-informed, accurate and compassionate media reporting on these issues.

Country studies carried out by the CBSS in 2018 showed that the coverage of human trafficking often has transitioned from being portrayed as a human rights issue to an issue of border, migration and security.

The media has an important role in highlighting issues of social challenges, migration, criminality and economy, and setting the political agenda in our societies. It is therefore obvious that media and journalism in portraying human trafficking also shape our understanding of it. As most people in the Baltic Sea Region, including state agencies, do not have sufficient knowledge on human trafficking and related crimes, they will likely resort to the media reporting as the main source of information.

RAISING THE AWARENESS OF JOURNALISTS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING - THALIA PROJECT

Country studies carried out by the CBSS in 2018, exploring how human trafficking is portrayed in the media through text-analysis, showed that the coverage of human trafficking has in some states transitioned from being portrayed as a human rights issue to an issue of border, migration and security. A security narrative may disregard important factors such as vulnerabilities, demand, human rights and gender aspects which must be recognized in order to counter human trafficking.

This reality, and the need to address human trafficking in the media thoroughly, laid the ground for the **THALIA² project**. The TF-THB THALIA project enabled the expert group

to partner with the journalism university departments in the region. The aim of this partnership was both to introduce the topic to teachers and students of journalism and include them in the discussion on human trafficking as a crime and phenomenon.

The project started as a pilot initiative between the TF-THB and Södertörn University in Stockholm in 2020. THALIA resulted in being one of the most successful projects carried out by the TF-THB.

Among the students participating in the project and the panel discussion activities, several stated that they were not aware that human trafficking as a phenomenon was as emerging in the Baltic Sea Region as it is and shared the view that the scope of human trafficking is not reflected in the media reporting.

– The main factor attracting Södertörn University to join the THALIA project was the need to improve the coverage of important societal topics, such as human trafficking in the media. For universities such as ours the project provided a good opportunity to test if human trafficking is a meaningful topic to apply journalism theories on. And it was, says project partner Mr Urban Larssen, Senior Lecturer at Södertörn University in Stockholm.

ENGAGING JOURNALISM STUDENTS ACROSS THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Although many can agree that it is important that the media covers issues such as human trafficking, the reality is that many journalists were not fully aware of the scope of human trafficking and how widely it occurs in the Baltic Sea Region. Therefore, a core activity of the project was to set up national seminars in the region. The stakeholders in the seminars included established journalists, students and teachers of journalism, but also professionals working on the field with human trafficking issues who have experiences in being in touch with the media. Over 700 journalist students in the region have so far participated in the activities.

– Among the students participating in the project and the panel discussion activities, several stated that they were not aware that human trafficking as a phenomenon was as emerging in the Baltic Sea Region.. They likewise shared the view that the scope of human trafficking is not properly reflected in the media reporting. The students valued being able to apply theories on journalism on concrete cases and topics, such as human trafficking, ads Mr. Larssen.

The THALIA project allowed the journalist students to assume the role of a researcher and not only a journalist, thanks to the very academic angle of the project.

With that said, it was important that the project assumed a hands-on journalistic approach but in an academic backdrop. The results of the project could benefit students deciding to take on work as journalists after their degree, as well as those wishing to remain in the academic sphere.

– The THALIA project allowed the journalist students to assume the role of a researcher and not only a journalist, thanks to the very academic angle of the project. For us it was crucial that the project generated added value for both the students ending up in newsrooms and as well as for those taking up research on the topic of journalism.

The THALIA project was executed in the Baltic Sea region in 2020-2022. The project was funded by the Swedish Institute and CBSS Project Support Facility.



1 Brus Pedersen, M, Plambech, S. 2019, From Bodies to Borders - Human migration, migration and gender in the Danish media 2010-2019.

2 Towards thoughtful, informed, and compassionate journalism in covering human trafficking.

BUILDING A COORDINATED RESPONSE TO TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF LABOUR EXPLOITATION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Fighting trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation remains a priority for the TF-THB, in a time where human trafficking continues to be a threat to both the Baltic Sea Region societies and the people residing here. Although the challenges ahead are great, practical and strategic initiatives on a regional level, like the CAPE project, push both the national and international work against this crime forward.



Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation is the second largest form of exploitation in the Baltic Sea Region according to the numbers on both registered victims and investigations. The majority of the presumed victims identified in the Baltic Sea Region originate from countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and Central Asia, as well as from countries in the Baltic Sea Region.

The main sectors in the Baltic Sea Region in which labour exploitation is identified are within the construction sector, restaurant and hotel businesses, nail salons, massage parlors, domestic work and cleaning jobs, and within the gig-economy. However, the number of cases identified - and where they are identified - is very much connected to both where the authorities are looking, and the resources allocated to detect and fight this crime.

RECOGNIZING SHARED CHALLENGES

The CBSS member states face similar challenges when it comes to countering human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation. Indications from the CBSS member states signal that labour exploitation is likely far more frequent than the numbers suggest. Mainly targeting labour migrants from the Central and Eastern parts of Europe, perpetrators deliberately take advantage of the vulnerabilities of labour migrants, refugees and irregular migrants and

exploit them to generate profit. Third country nationals working in the region, a group with a low trust towards state authorities. Migrants under the overhanging risk of being deported if residing in the country illegally, are unlikely to report abuse and exploitation to authorities, or often even to NGOs.

Moreover, criminal networks and employers in the region utilize sophisticated schemes, involving recruitment companies and middle hands in both countries of origin and destination to recruit individuals with the purpose of exploiting them.

Human trafficking is a gendered crime and this understanding should also be applied on labour exploitation. The division of men making up the majority of victims of labour exploitation and women the majority of victims of sexual exploitation needs to be understood through a gender perspective. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of female victims being subjected to multiple forms of exploitation in the Baltic Sea Region is very real. Women can be exploited in both labour and sexual exploitation simultaneously, for example in connection to working in massage parlors.

The aspect of victim assistance becomes further complicated in the context of labour exploitation as the majority of the victims in the Baltic Sea Region are men.

THE CAPE PROJECT – A JOINT INITIATIVE AGAINST LABOUR EXPLOITATION

Against this background, the TF-THB initiated the project CAPE¹ in 2019. As the strength of the TF-THB cooperation against human trafficking has been the ability to attack human trafficking from different perspectives simultaneously, it was agreed that the main goal of the project was to strengthen the capacity of practitioners on the field by exploring different perspectives in the context of labour exploitation in the region.

In addition, it was jointly agreed by the project partners that a project against labour exploitation is needed, that manages to connect practitioners working on the field in the region and to support the sharing of their operational knowledge and best practices against human trafficking.

There were examples of courts still not applying the international definition of human trafficking, but sometimes basing the rulings on outdated legal definitions and stereotypical perceptions of what human trafficking victimization entails

Funded by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency and the CBSS Project Support Facility, the wide scope of the project included four country studies looking into different aspects of labour exploitation in Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

According to the studies it is evident that the work against labour exploitation must be intensified jointly. The systematic recruitment of vulnerable persons in the region for labour exploitation is continuous. From a law enforcement perspective, the region faces a two-front battle in not only identifying and prosecuting employers directly responsible for the exploitation but also disturbing schemes consisting of middle hands and unserious recruitment companies luring individuals into exploitative environments.

The aspect of victim assistance becomes further complicated in the context of labour exploitation as the majority of the victims in the Baltic Sea

¹ Competence building, Assistance provision and Prosecution of labour exploitation cases in the Baltic Sea Region

Region are men. A lack of trust for authorities among migrant workers, combined with the fact that authorities still have inaccurate perceptions and an outdated imagery of how victims should behave and look like may prevent victims from being identified and assisted.

The studies demonstrated that the overall number of criminal proceedings, and especially convictions, concerning this serious crime is still low. For instance, there were examples of courts still not applying the international definition of human trafficking, but sometimes basing the rulings on outdated legal definitions and stereotypical perceptions of what human trafficking victimization entails.



The study findings were introduced at the CAPE conference which gathered experienced anti-trafficking stakeholder from the international level, state agencies, NGOs and survivors of human trafficking. The findings also resulted in three study visits with Swedish anti-trafficking practitioners working on the field to CBSS member states such as Germany and Finland to have the opportunity to exchange knowledge with their counterparts.



As an outcome of the project, recommendations will be developed and published by the TF-THB in 2023.

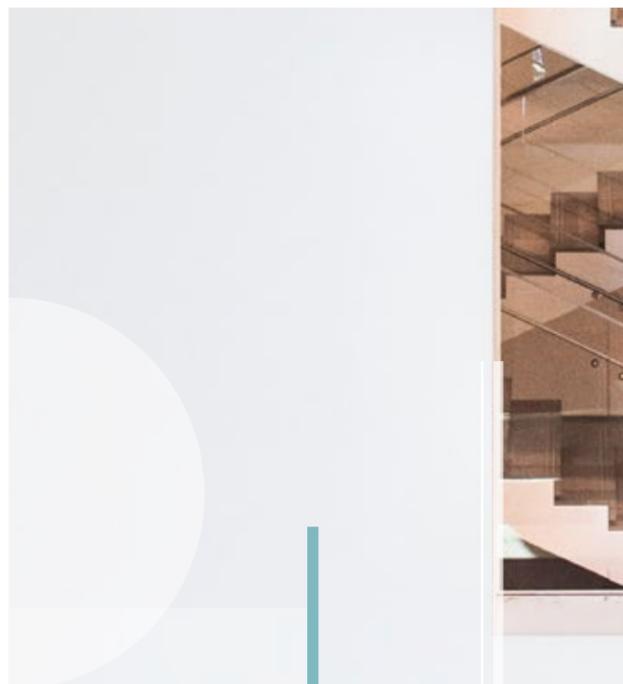
ADOPTING JOINT STRATEGIC APPROACH TO LABOUR EXPLOITATION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

The activities of the CAPE project have laid the ground for further strategic level cooperation. To boost the national efforts and to enhance the regional cooperation against human trafficking the TF-THB adopted the *Joint Statement of commitment to work against human trafficking for labour exploitation in the Baltic Sea region*, during the Lithuanian Presidency of the CBSS 2020-2021.

In the joint statement, the TF-THB member states committed to strengthening assistance and compensation to victims, fostering direct exchange on the topic and increasing public communication to raise awareness among the general population in the region.

Moreover, as the modus of the perpetrators behind this crime is ever-changing, it is highly important that the CBSS member states are prepared to take the steps necessary in order to ensure an updated legislation, not only effective in prosecuting perpetrators but also successful in detecting and assisting victims of this crime.

The implementation of the Joint Statement will be one of the priorities of the German Presidency of the CBSS and the TF-THB, in 2022-2023.



The goals of the Joint Statement

1. Ensure sustained and systematic capacity-building and training for all relevant stakeholders.
2. Reinforce the institutional framework and ensure dialogue, information sharing and mutual assistance.
3. Put in place legislation to ensure criminal responsibility in situations where workers are exploited by being subjected to unacceptable working conditions. Promote fair recruitment, responsible public procurement, and tackle demand for services and goods produced with human trafficking.
4. Strengthen cooperation with the private sector in developing anti-trafficking responses.
5. Set up labour inspectorates or equivalent mechanisms with the mandate to investigate trafficking and promote widespread and systematic inspections of companies as well as contractors and private employment agencies.
6. Promote labour protection in sectors and industries prone to exploitation and long and complex supply chains, paying special attention to irregular workers.
7. Provide victims subjected to trafficking with adequate assistance, compensation, and support regardless of age, gender, and/or nationality.
8. Foster awareness on human trafficking for labour exploitation among the public through prevention measures, including awareness raising and public communication.

COMPETENCE RAISING INITIATIVES FOR PRACTITIONERS IN THE REGION AND BEYOND

Professionals do not always have adequate tools to successfully assist victims of human trafficking that they may encounter. The revision of the CBSS Handbook for Embassies Diplomatic Missions on how to Assist and Protect Victims of Human Trafficking and the creation, and enforcement, of the Baltic Transnational Referral Mechanism, have been the latest efforts of the TF-THB to build up the capacity of practitioners to assist victims in the region and beyond.

HANDBOOK FOR EMBASSIES AND DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ON HOW TO ASSIST AND PROTECT VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The responsibility to take action when identifying potential victims of human trafficking must include all state agencies and authorities. With that said, professionals who may encounter victims of human trafficking have to be equipped with the adequate knowledge. Many professionals, such as case handlers at diplomatic missions, are expected to assume a generalist approach and may not have the tools needed in order to successfully assist the most vulnerable ones.

The revised Handbook combines an updated legal framework and a strengthened human rights perspective with a training package for diplomatic missions wishing to increase their knowledge on the issue of human trafficking.

In 2011, the TF-THB published a handbook for personnel at diplomatic missions on how to assist victims of human trafficking. The handbook was well-received and has since then been one of the most successful TF-THB initiatives, managing to put the TF-THB and its work on the map. Besides from functioning as a go-to guide for the case-handlers at diplomatic missions when suspecting cases of human trafficking, the handbook has been widely and systematically disseminated within the Ministries of Foreign Affairs structures in the member states.

In order to reawaken the priority of competence raising efforts for personnel at diplomatic missions abroad, the TF-THB revised the handbook. **The Handbook for Embassies and Diplomatic Missions on how to assist and protect victims of human trafficking**, is launched in 2022, in cooperation with the Swedish Ambassador at large for combatting trafficking in persons and the Swedish NGO Child10. The revised Handbook combines an updated legal framework and a strengthened human rights perspective with a training package for diplomatic missions wishing to increase their knowledge on the issue of human trafficking.

In cases of transnational trafficking, victims are often transferred from an assistance system in a country of destination to another system in a country of origin. If these systems do not complement each other and the transition is not smooth, the person is at higher risk of being re-trafficked.

ENSURING AND COORDINATING VICTIM ASSISTANCE IN THE REGION – THE BALTIC TRANSNATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM

The challenges faced by the CBSS member states in the work against human trafficking are related to both impunity for the perpetrators behind the crime, and to the lack of assistance to its victims. From the perspective of a practitioner working on the local level, detecting and taking-on a case of human trafficking can be overwhelming, especially if it includes a transnational referral and cooperation with stakeholders abroad.

In cases of transnational trafficking, victims are often transferred from an assistance system in a country of destination to another system in a country of origin. If these systems do not complement each other and the transition is not smooth, the person is at higher risk of being re-trafficked. It has been observed that the same victims are exploited in several countries of the Baltic Sea Region and sometimes subjected to human trafficking for multiple forms of exploitation. In this complex reality, structured and efficient cross-border cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region is not something that should be viewed as a preferred practice. On the opposite, it is a central method to combat trafficking and protect victims.

Noticing this the TF-THB has set up the **Baltic Transnational Referral Mechanism (TRM)**. The Baltic TRM is a map of standardized steps that professionals in the Baltic Sea Region can take in

order to properly assist a victim of human trafficking. The tool includes country descriptions of the CBSS member states, as well as Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine, through which professionals can learn about the responsibilities and mandates of all anti-trafficking stakeholders in the countries when it comes to referral of victims - from early identification to assistance and a safe return.

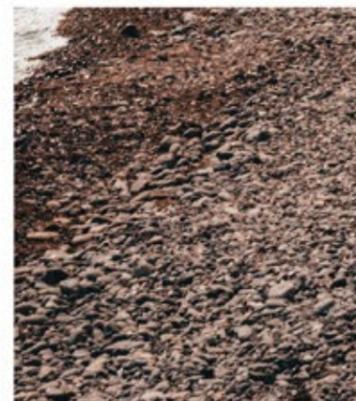
To further enforce the TRM, the TF-THB is running an evaluation of the mechanism in 2022-2023. The evaluation is supported by the PROMISE-TRM project, which aims to incorporate a child-centered perspective to the existing TRM structure. The project is carried out with the Children at Risk Unit of the CBSS and NGO Child Circle. The estimated schedule for this is in 2024.

The TRM tool is available online at www.bsr-trm.com.

BEST PRACTICES: TF-THB MEMBER STATES



DENMARK



In DENMARK, victims of sexual exploitation have a possibility to access mobile health clinics. By bringing health services to those selling sexual services, the Danish non-governmental organisations are able to reach out to the most vulnerable, including victims of human trafficking. Thanks to this initiative, the Danish NGOs have been able to assume a wider overview of the Danish extent of prostitution and improved the prevention of sexual exploitation.

Access to healthcare is an integral part of assisting victims of human trafficking. When referred to services, victims have at minimum access to acute healthcare, and often more, if their residence in the country is legalized. However, in Denmark NGOs have taken a different approach to the issue. For them, health is not only the end goal, but also means to reach out to marginalized people in the edges of society.

- In our work in Jutland, we noticed that people in the sex industry have quite limited access to health services. In Jutland, where we work, distances between houses can be long and for various reasons people might have difficulties in leaving their accommodation. Thus, we decided to found mobile health clinics, Lisbeth Bohmann, project manager from NGO AmiAmi elaborates.

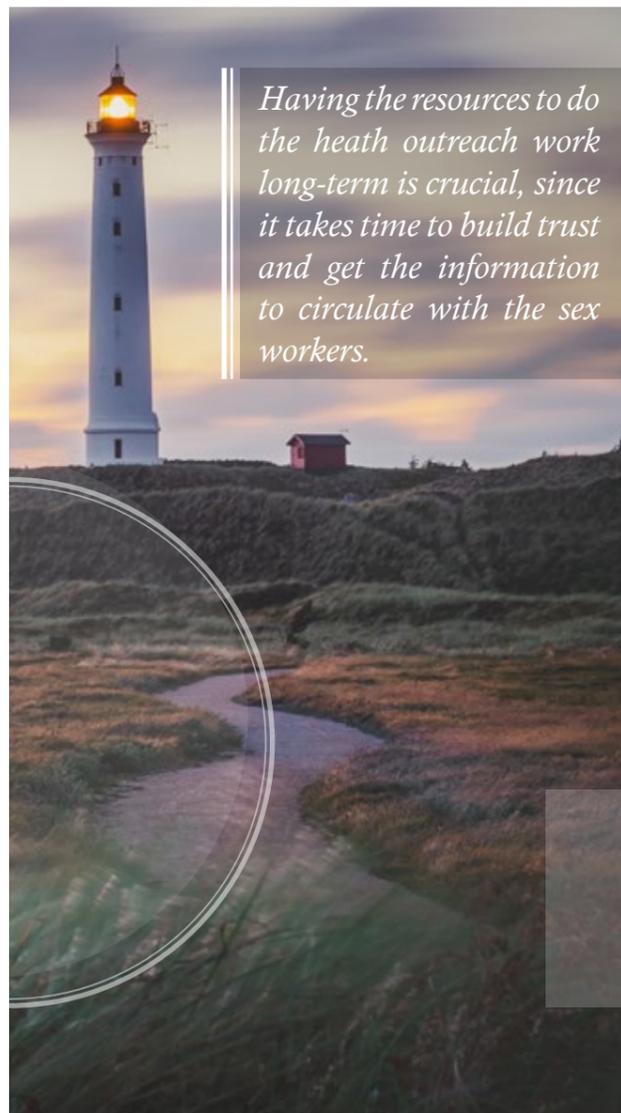
NGO Reden International, working to prevent human trafficking among women selling sexual services in Copenhagen, had similar experiences in its outreach work:

- After opening the first drop-in centre in the Copenhagen red light district in partnership with the Danish Centre against Human Trafficking (CMM) in 2008, we noticed that if the health is put to the forefront, you reach people much faster and easier. Pure social work, as important as it is, did not open ways to women, transgender persons and men selling sexual services the same way. Health is something concrete, something to start from. It speaks to people, including those who have experienced exploitation. The women that we have met also requested health services

for themselves, Marlene Muusholm, anti-trafficking coordinator from the NGO Reden International, emphasizes.

FACILITATING THE ACCESS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE TO HEALTHCARE

Both AmiAmi and Reden International have used same methods with the mobile health clinics. Mobile health units, in practice a nurse, visit places where sexual services are provided to meet the women, transgender persons and men, including vulnerable groups of people and possible victims of human trafficking. When meeting the people for the first time, the nurse introduces herself, informs the target group about the possibility to get medical care or examinations and gives them health counselling. Social workers also accompany the nurse to offer information and after assistance to the women. The majority of the women selling sexual services in Denmark come from abroad and are staying in Denmark illegally.



Having the resources to do the health outreach work long-term is crucial, since it takes time to build trust and get the information to circulate with the sex workers.

- Due to the long-term outreach work, the women already know who we are and what services they can get from us. Often, even though there would not be a need for or the willingness to receive any services, it is good that the women know that we are here for them. Hence, we try to at least inform them of the possibilities. The women selling sexual services are quite active in spreading the information, which can lead to contacts from persons that we have not ourselves yet reached, Lisbeth Bohmann illustrates.

If the women have a need for more extensive treatment, they can visit the health clinics of AmiAmi and Reden International. In the clinics they can for instance meet a gynecologist or discuss with doctors hired by the NGOs in a voluntary or contractual basis. If the need arises, the person can be referred to hospitals for urgent health care or further examinations.

The experience is that by having a good collaboration with the target group and offering help also to those who are not in the worst situation, they are more willing to share details on the environment and the places where exploitation might take place.

- We have kept the threshold to get counselling and health services in Copenhagen as low as possible. The women selling sexual services have a right to access acute treatment and receive information, even if they would at some stage return to their countries of origin, Marlene Muusholm points out.

REACHING OUT TO PEOPLE SELLING SEXUAL SERVICES ONLINE

In parallel to the in-person outreach work, both AmiAmi and Reden International have extended their work online due to the growing online sexual exploitation that Covid-19 pandemic further accelerated. The methods used online are quite similar to the outreach work carried out in-person.

- First, one needs to map the situation. Who are the ones offering sexual services? What nationalities do they represent? Where do

they offer services? After the overview has been established, the nurse contacts the women. The contact is mostly done by sending a compact text message to the number that is attached to the advertisement or by a phone call. The text message includes information on who we are, what we can offer and requests to save the number so that they can reach out to us when they have the need to do so. The nurse can moreover use text messages to inform that she is in a particular city tomorrow and can make a visit if the person feels comfortable about it, Lisbeth Bohmann explains.

To be effective, the health outreach work must take into consideration different contexts. The nationalities, environments, and specific needs of the people selling sexual services impact on the outreach work. To be as inclusive as possible, the women are also given a voice on how they want to be approached.

- When we went online, we requested the women feedback about the text messages that were sent to them. As we got to know how they felt, we adapted our approach accordingly. Often for instance the cultural background of the women effects on how they want to be approached and what kind of information they want to receive, Lisbeth Bohmann describes.

OVERVIEW OF THE DANISH SEX INDUSTRY SUPPORTS THE DETECTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

As the nurses and social workers are on the move, they collect information about the environment, places where sexual services are offered and current trends in the Danish sex industry. Ultimately, this leads into the NGOs having a better overview of the environments where prostitution takes place. The women themselves are an important source of information.

- The experience is that by having a good collaboration with the women selling sexual services and offering help also to those, who are not necessarily exploited, the women are more willing to share details on the environment and the places where exploitation might take place. This helps us to better reach out to the possible victims, Marlene Muusholm ads.

The information that the nurses and the social workers gather can be shared with other stakeholders. The Danish Centre against Human Trafficking (CMM) and the Danish police are particularly important as they have the ability to assist possible victims of human trafficking. Information can subsequently be shared to the political level for the development of new policies and to increase the support for anti-trafficking work.

At times, the outreach workers can meet the suspected victims on the behalf of, or together with, the CMM or the police to build trust and facilitate victims' access to services.

- We are working with the police on many different levels. Besides sharing information, we can call the police to assist us if we have suspicions that exploitation is taking place in a particular environment. In the case we meet an underaged person, the police is called immediately. The police can likewise share information with us and warn us to avoid certain areas if they are investigating a case. It is important that both the NGOs and the police know what the other is doing, says Lisbeth Bohmann.

MOBILE HEALTH CLINICS A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

The mobile health clinics of AmiAmi and Reden International handle hundreds of cases yearly. The Covid-19 pandemic decreased the numbers temporarily, but the use of the services has continued after the restrictions have been lifted – both in person and online. Acknowledging the role of the mobile health clinics in the anti-trafficking work, the current Danish National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings has provided the NGOs separate funds to formalize the health clinics. For Reden International, this means that they can have two nurses to carry out the mobile health clinic service. The cooperation and information-sharing with the CMM continues closely, even though the CMM are not responsible for the operational work at the drop in centre.

- Having the resources to carry out the health outreach work long-term is crucial, since it takes time to build trust and have the information on available services circulated between within the target group. Even with the outreach work carried out on a regular basis, getting a full overview of the Danish sex industry is next to impossible as opportunities to collect the information come and go. The knowledge that we have compiled during the years can easily cease to exist if these kinds of easy-access initiatives are not supported. That is why it is dangerous to shut down projects like these, says Marlene Muusholm.

NATIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING TRAININGS OF THE DANISH WORKING ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY

The Danish Working Environment Authority, together with the Police and the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI), have conducted thematic trainings on human trafficking for the relevant inspection teams around the country in 2020-2022. Around 75 inspectors have participated in the trainings so far. The trainings focused on the Danish anti-trafficking set-up, support for victims, legal aspects and indicators of human trafficking.

In practise, it can be difficult to differentiate between cases of human trafficking social dumping and exploitation of foreign workers. Nonetheless, the trainings have led to a closer cooperation and more dialogue on a day-to-day basis where specific concerns of trafficking in a workplace can be discussed.

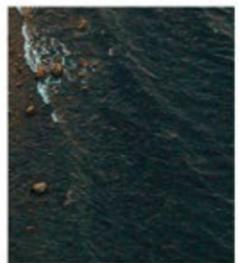
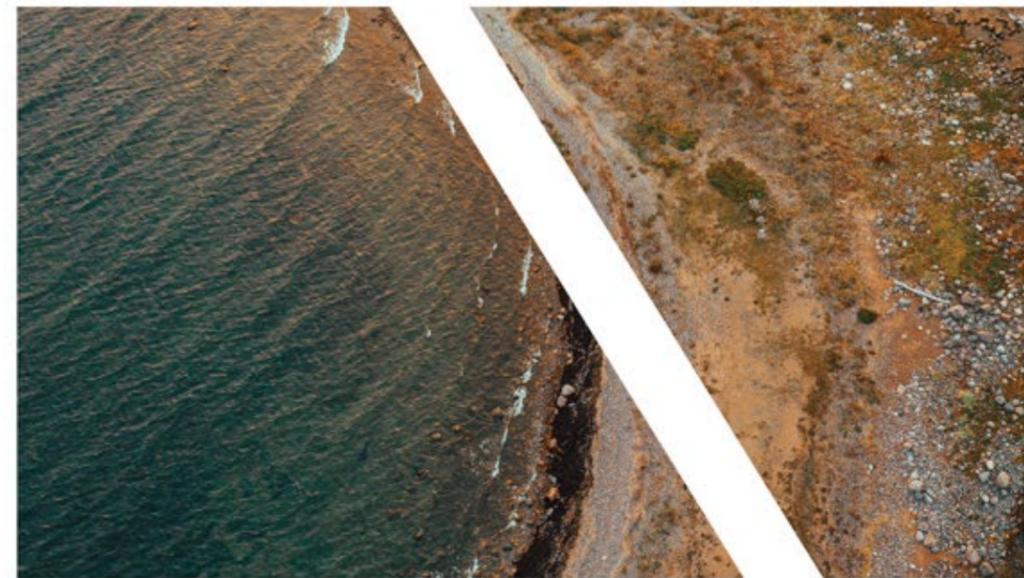
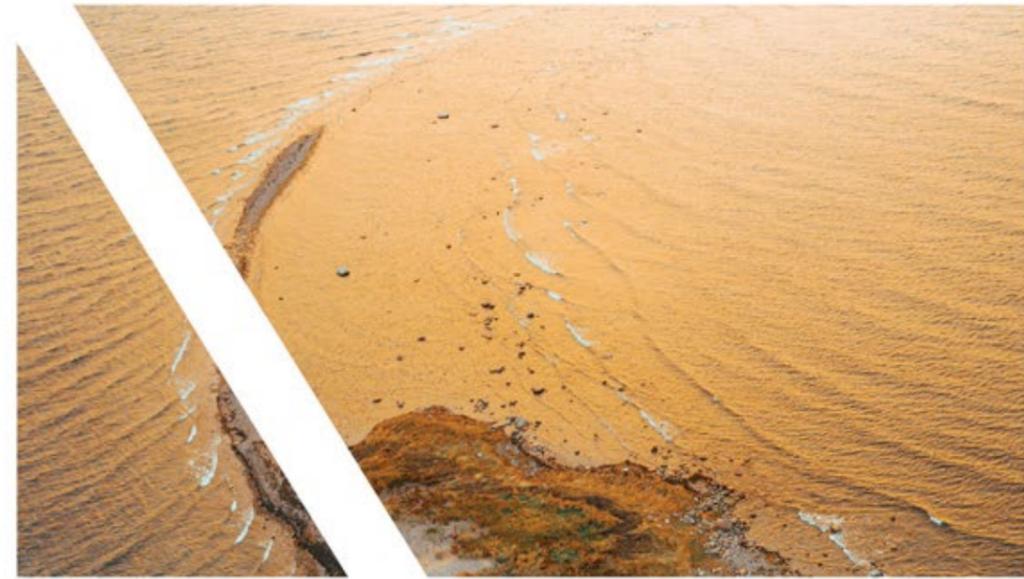
The trainings continue to ensure knowledge sharing and awareness on human trafficking.

THE COMMUNICATION AND PRESS-STRATEGY IN THE NATIONAL BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

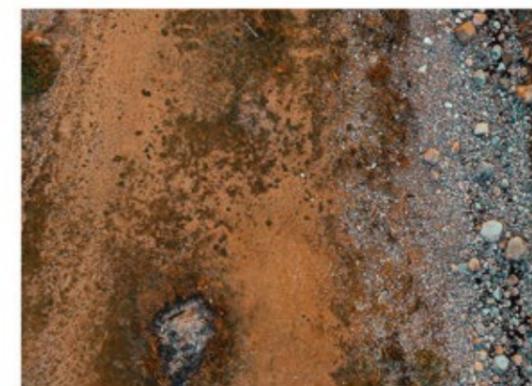
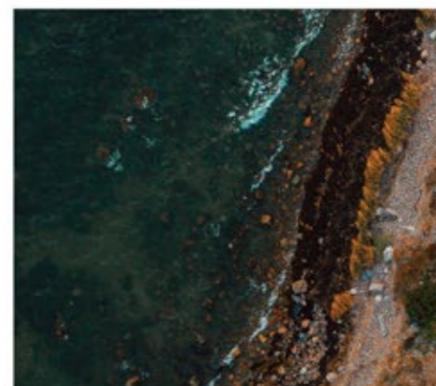
The National Board of Social Services where the Danish Centre against Human Trafficking (CMM) is part of, has developed a communication and press strategy that emphasises a proactive and strategic media approach. This includes a continuous focus on human trafficking.

The CMM has consequently adopted a more proactive approach to communication which has led to a broader interest in the area of human trafficking in media and a range of interviews in Danish media platforms, especially in the spring when the CMM published the annual report on human trafficking in Denmark and held an annual conference on human trafficking.

DENMARK
OTHER GOOD PRACTICES



ESTONIA



ESTONIA has been actively raising awareness on trafficking in human beings among the youth. Campaigns and trainings that have targeted students in schools and universities have changed the perceptions of youth on human trafficking and problematized their role as possible demanders of services. With lessons learned from the campaigns, the Social Insurance Board is getting ready for a new awareness-raising project targeting all the youth in Estonia

It is estimated that children constitute almost one third of all the human trafficking victims worldwide.¹ Victims, identified after they have reached full age, have often been exploited already as minors, which means that the actual number of child victims of trafficking might be even higher than is known.

¹ UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.20.IV.3).

Likewise, the number of children who are engaged into criminality and influenced to take part in crimes related to human trafficking has been quite remarkable in Estonia, when compared to other identified groups. During 2010-2021, Estonia registered 331 cases regarding children recruited into human trafficking and related crimes. As majority of the children exploited are between 15-18 years old, Estonia has introduced measures to raise the awareness of the young population on human trafficking. The goal is to prevent young people to falling victims to this serious crime.

- Everyone, including minors minors should be entitled to live their lives away from harm, we have had a good reason to target the youth. The youth are offered tools to identify the risks of being trafficked. In parallel we have an opportunity to talk about demand with them, Sirle Blumberg, Manager of human trafficking victims support service in the Estonian Social Insurance Board illustrates.



Human trafficking needs to be connected to the daily lives of the youth. It is often futile to talk about the confiscation of victims' passports, since this does not necessarily mean anything for them.

PREVENTIVE ANTI-TRAFFICKING WORK ACCUMULATES KNOW-HOW

Estonian stakeholders are not new to awareness-raising activities. Preventive human trafficking work in Estonia has been conducted for years, starting already at vocational schools. Estonian anti-trafficking experts met or still meet with the vocational students on a yearly basis to discuss various types of human trafficking, for instance sham marriages or sexual exploitation. The demand of exploitative services have also been addressed in these meetings, in particular with boys. Basing the discussions on the issue of demand proved to be an effective way to engage young people in thinking about what exploitation means.

- The meetings with vocational students were great, since they demonstrated how yearly engagement with the vocational school students accumulated their awareness. When we came back the following year, most of the students already had some background knowledge of the topic. Naturally, the fact that Estonia is not a large country facilitated the dissemination of information in schools, Ms. Blumberg explains.

The experiences with the vocational schools worked as a solid base to build youth campaigns on human trafficking. The Estonian "Back to School" initiative was used to reach out to schools and disseminate information to children aged 15-18.

However, it was also recognised that not all children can be reached through schools. The Covid-19 pandemic had moved the school work online. Moreover, a number of youngsters were known to socialise in environments that increased the risk of them becoming victims of forced criminality. To get the information to the most vulnerable, the Social Insurance Board together with Estonian Back to School initiative produced Youtube videos on human trafficking. The focus of the videos was to convey information to children and young people on what human trafficking is and how the Estonian Social Insurance Board can assist possible victims, Sirle Blumberg explains.

- The use of different channels, for example lectures, Internet and leaflets, is crucial if one aims to get the message through to the youth. Due to Covid-19, and the heavy online emphasis in all activities, including school, it was clear that lengthy lectures about the topic would have fallen to deaf ears. Using different channels permitted us to reach out also to children that do not speak Estonian. For instance, the Russian speaking minority in Estonia, uses completely different channels than their Estonian peers.

WITH YOUTH, IT IS ALL ABOUT METHODS

One of the most important lessons that have been learnt in the youth awareness-raising work, is the knowledge of how to address human trafficking with this specific group. First, the approach must take into consideration the unique background of the children and young people addressed. Universal messages that try to take into account every single group are likely to fail. Second, the message should be as clear and honest as possible so that this target group understands what is being said.

- Human trafficking needs to be connected to the daily lives of the youth. It is often futile to talk about the confiscation of victims' passports, since this does not necessarily mean anything for them. However, when sexual exploitation or forced criminality is linked to perpetrators using sensitive personal photos to force or lure people into exploitation, the youth listen, Ms. Blumberg demonstrates.

Rather than portraying human trafficking as something dark, as is still done in many social campaigns, the material should be so attractive that you can make a wallpaper of it without it disturbing you

Third, the attraction to the topic includes the need for the youth to face their prejudices. In practice, this means using modified cases that do not portray human trafficking in an obvious way but are connected to it. The case can be framed in a way that it is easy to draw a conclusion that the victim was exploited due to their choice. When the full picture is revealed, the perceptions of what human trafficking can entail often change.

- Rather than portraying human trafficking as something dark, as is still done in many social campaigns, the material should be so attractive that you can make a wallpaper of it without it disturbing you. Stereotypes and stereotypical images, people in chains and cages, can be used in trainings, but only to make people understand what trafficking is not and that the ideal image of the victim is seldom the right one. Influencing persons with force is nowadays done more psychologically than physically.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED FACTUALLY

The Estonia Social Insurance Board has recently cooperated with universities. Last year, law students at the University of Tartu were offered a study module on human trafficking, where various Estonian anti-trafficking experts shared their impressions on different aspects of the phenomenon. As part of the Council of the Baltic Sea States THALIA project, university level media students were actively included to increase the awareness of future journalists on the topic of human trafficking.

- Rather than taking a top-down approach with the university students, where we would tell how things are, we gave them an opportunity to speak their minds on the topic. As the discussion went on, we started to introduce them facts and information on human trafficking and the reasons why individuals have been exploited. As expected, the images of human trafficking were quite different from the facts. The students were genuinely shocked, for instance, that people of various ages and genders had been sexually exploited in Estonia, Ms. Blumberg elaborates.

What we do know, is that the awareness-raising done in the framework of the new project needs to be clear, simple, attractive, based on facts - and hopeful.

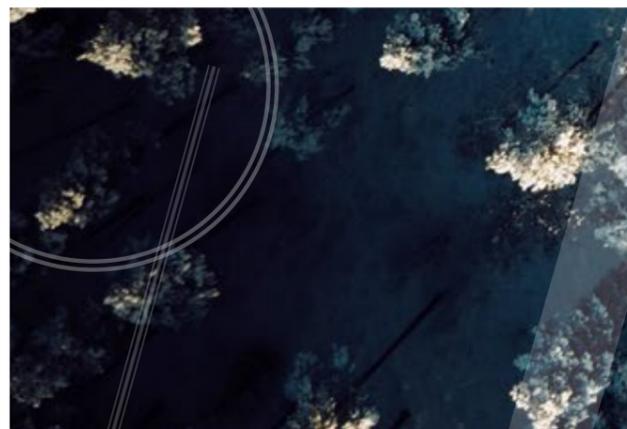
For the media students, the increased awareness was supported by a possibility of concrete action. As a part of the module, the students had to use the new information and engage in a project on the topic. This led to different initiatives, including podcasts and material on human trafficking for schools, especially for 8-9 graders.

DOING THE AWARENESS RAISING BIGGER FOR THE YOUTH IN ESTONIA

The lessons learned from the Estonian awareness-raising campaigns with children and young people have also benefitted other groups. The Social Insurance Board and Labour Inspectorate, Tax and Customs Board, Ministry of Justice, Police and Border Guard Board and Tartu University initiated several Youtube live -sessions to foreigners arriving to Estonia to share information about the available free services. When refugees from Ukraine started to arrive in Estonia, similar videos were made for volunteers to make them more knowledgeable of possible exploitation and how to report the signs to the authorities.

The work with the youth in Estonia continues. Estonia has recently received a large project funding to raise the awareness of youth on human trafficking from Internal Security Fund. This time, the target group ambitiously includes around 30% of the gymnasium level students in Estonia.

- Awareness-raising can be done as long as there is a passion to do it. Even though we have previously worked with youth, we cannot be too complacent and think that we have all the best tools and methods to reach out to them. What we do know, is that the awareness-raising done in the framework of the new project needs to be clear, simple, attractive, based on facts - and hopeful, Sirle Blumberg concludes.



ESTONIA OTHER GOOD PRACTICES

DEMAND REDUCTION PROJECT

Estonian NGO Eluliin has been actively promoting demand reduction in Estonia. The NGO is currently managing a project that has two aims:

1. Public campaign „Think with your head“, (<https://motlepeaga.ee>). The campaign addressed demand of sexual services. One of the key messages to the public, especially to young males, of the campaign is that prostitution is linked to organised crime and women involved in prostitution are often victims of human trafficking.
2. Social program designed to provide sex buyers knowledge of human trafficking, law, health care, and other social aspects related to buying sex with the purpose to help participating men change their attitudes and behaviour. The program offers individual counselling to sex buyers to refrain them from buying sex. The target group includes sex buyers who have record of committing crimes related to human trafficking and voluntary participants. Sex buyers were involved in the creation of the social programme through a study and structured interviews. The social programme is complimented with a manual which contains theoretical, methodological and visual material to carry out the program.

AWARENESS-RAISING ON RECRUITING FOREIGN WORKERS

In 2021, Estonian authorities organised Youtube [live training sessions](#) for enterpreneurs, in order to raise their awareness of the existing state services when they embark on recruiting foreign workers. The need for the videos was raised, due to a need for help in relation to the labour market situations with foreigners.

The videos were done in three languages, Estonian, Russian and English. The videos include presentations from Migration advisers, employment lawyers, tax officials, and victim support professionals. Moreover, they address how businesses can prevent labour exploitation.



FINLAND



The National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking has had a significant impact on the anti-trafficking work in FINLAND. For more than 16 years, the National Assistance System has assisted victims and collected information on trafficking in human beings. By training various stakeholders and disseminating information on human trafficking, the National Assistance System has encouraged other state institutions to take the phenomenon seriously and to invest in finding sustainable solutions to assist victims in all levels of Finnish society.

The assistance for victims of human trafficking can be organised in different ways. In Finland, the state has a pivotal role in assisting victims of human trafficking. According to the Finnish Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, victims of human trafficking have a right to various protective measures, including safe accommodation, advice and guidance, health and social services, financial support, and legal assistance that the state is required to provide.

To ensure that the victims' rights to these services are realised, the Act has established the National Assistance System, a specialised public authority tasked to help possible victims of human trafficking, their underage children, and persons, who are assisting with the investigation. Today, the National Assistance System also works as the national knowledge centre on human trafficking, provides trainings and information to other stakeholders, raises public awareness on human trafficking, and supports the work of other institutions that can meet possible victims.

- There are two significant benefits of having a public authority rather than an NGO responsible for assisting victims of human trafficking. On one hand, as the mandate of the National Assistance System is based on law, it is much easier to work with other public authorities and make sure that victims' rights are respected. On the other hand, public authorities, like the National Assistance System, have certain liability for their acts in office since its mandate and tasks have been established by law. The liability means that acts can be better monitored and the requirements for transparency are higher, Dr. Venla Roth, the Finnish Anti-Trafficking Coordinator elaborates.

The fact that we can contact one institution which is able to assist victims of human trafficking is paramount. This is emphasised in situations that require a rapid response.

ACCUMULATED KNOW-HOW LEADS TO IMPROVED RESPONSE

The National Assistance System is often the first point of contact for victims to access services. NGOs, the police, the border guard, Finnish Immigration Service, reception centres and other public authorities and institutions can refer possible victims to the National Assistance System which assesses the situation and victims' need for services. If the situation requires a rapid response, the National Assistance System can arrange safe accommodation and other services for victims immediately. The threshold to services is low.

- The fact that we can contact one institution which is able to assist victims of human trafficking is paramount. This is emphasised in situations that require a rapid response. If the National Assistance System did not exist, it would take us considerable amount of time to sort out who is the right authority to contact in which case - and then to negotiate with them what can be done to help the victim, Pia Marttila, Coordinating Senior Advisor, from Victim Support Finland illustrates.

The statistics show that National Assistance System has been highly used. In the past years, circa 250 presumed victims and their underage children have been accepted to the National Assistance System. In June 2022, the National Assistance System has 1184 clients, an all-time high in the history of the institution.

Even though the statistics of the National Assistance System are not all-encompassing, since not all the identified victims want assistance from a state authority, the National Assistance System has been able to compile comprehensive data for instance of the most identified forms of human trafficking and nationalities of victims.

The creation of sustainable cooperation with the law enforcement authorities has been especially noteworthy. Over the years, the National Assistance System has trained more than 2000 police and border guards, including police and border guard students on human trafficking.

BUILDING MULTIAGENCY COOPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Simultaneously, the National Assistance System has been able to develop its services to take into consideration the needs of victims that rise from the type and length of exploitation, gender, age, migration status and family situation. From its expert role, the National Assistance System has shared this information with municipalities and reception centres, which on several occasions are producing services for human trafficking victims.

- The National Assistance System has the authority to cooperate with and support other service providing institutions so that victims of human trafficking receive the services they are entitled to. This certain interest advocacy of the National Assistance System has benefitted the victims. In addition, it has supported the municipalities to seek reimbursement from the services that they produce to victims, Dr. Roth highlights.

The creation of sustainable cooperation with the law enforcement authorities has been especially noteworthy. Over the years, the National Assistance System has trained more than 2000 police and border guards, including police and border guard students on human trafficking. The National Assistance system has offered consultation for the police, border guard and labour inspectors to talk about cases and whether they constitute human trafficking. Together with the law enforcement authorities, the National Assistance System has also participated to field operations to assist the possible victims on the spot.

- The cooperation with the National Assistance System has always been straightforward and uncomplicated. The National Assistance System has worked with us in accommodating victims and identifying and assisting them during surveillance or other pretrial investigative procedures. The fact that the National Assistance System has also provided irregular foreign victims services, reflection period and supported them in voluntary return, has improved the chances of the victim working with the police and participating in the

legal proceedings, Pekka Hätönen, National Investigation Lead for the Finnish Police National Unit against Trafficking in Human Beings, describes.

MAKING FINNS MORE AWARE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Despite public authorities and NGOs referring the majority of victims to the National Assistance System, there are some that find the way to assistance by themselves or with the support of aware citizens. To facilitate the self-referrals, the National Assistance System has developed the national information hub, www.ihmiskauppa.fi, to include information on human trafficking, identification and assistance in more than 20 languages. Multilanguage counselling is also available through the national hotline that the National Assistance System sustains.

It is easy to say that without the National Assistance System, we would be depleted of a strong operational stakeholder that has a significant role in the Finnish anti-trafficking work.

The efforts that the National Assistance System has put in offering public information on human trafficking and victim assistance have paid off as the number of self-referrals has risen. According to Dr. Roth, the awareness-raising activities of the National Assistance System have also had a great impact on the Finnish society.

- Along other anti-trafficking institutions, the National Assistance System has raised awareness on human trafficking in the Finnish society and made it more visible. This has not only challenged how we think about the phenomenon but also what we are doing to prevent it.

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM IN THE FUTURE

In the last two years, the organisation of the services for victims of human trafficking have been discussed more than previously in Finland due to a legislative project focusing on improving the access of victims to services and weaken the connection between the provision of assistance and criminal proceedings. The amendments are currently leading towards further strengthening the role of the National Assistance System as the anti-trafficking knowledge centre. The new legislation has not yet been discussed in the Finnish Parliament.

- As studies have shown that the work of the National Assistance System is meaningful, it is a positive thing that the new legislation emphasises the expert role of the National Assistance System. It is a natural development since the National Assistance System already has several responsibilities in anti-trafficking work. This is also reflected in the Finnish National Action plan. It is easy to say that without the National Assistance System, we would be depleted of a strong operational stakeholder that has a significant role in the Finnish anti-trafficking work, Dr. Roth concludes.



FINLAND: OTHER GOOD PRACTICES

INDEPENDENT NATIONAL RAPPOREUR IN HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Finland has had a National Rapporteur in Human Trafficking since 2009. The rapporteur, working under the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, examines the human trafficking phenomenon and the anti-trafficking work in Finland as an independent body. The aim of the Rapporteur is to ensure that victims of human trafficking are identified, they receive help and their rights are enforced. The tasks and the mandate, as well as the independence of the Rapporteur, have been enforced by a separate legislation. That the Rapporteurs mandate is based on law has been highly significant to ensure proper and independent reporting.

The tasks of the rapporteur include:

- Monitoring that the Finnish anti-trafficking work is in compliance with international obligations.
- Follow the effectiveness of the national legislation and assess how it responds to challenges rising from human trafficking and report to the Finnish Parliament.
- Publish reports, studies and recommendations.
- Evoke political and public debate on human trafficking.
- Provision of legal advice to victims of human trafficking if needed, and, in exceptional situations, assist them in courts.

Having a direct access to the Finnish Parliament, the reports and recommendations of the National Rapporteur have received attention politically and have transformed the Finnish anti-trafficking legislation and structures. For instance, The Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government (2019) has offered a strong political support for the Finnish anti-trafficking work, as it includes several items on human trafficking.

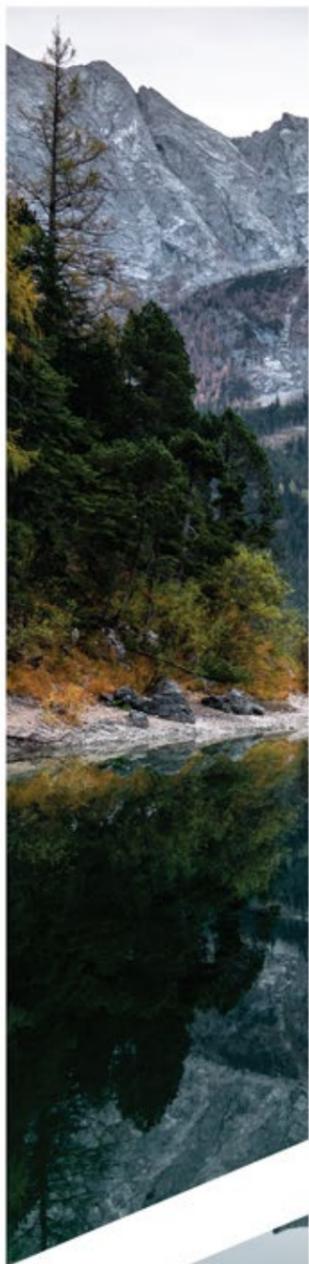
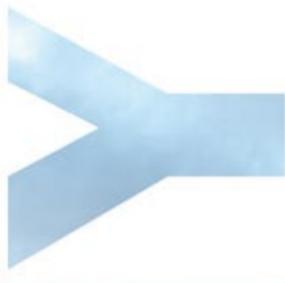
SPECIAL COMPETENCE IN COMBATTING LABOUR EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING

Forced labour and labour exploitation is the most detected form of human trafficking in Finland. For instance, in 2021, the National Assistance System reported 48 new labour exploitation victims who had been exploited in Finland, more than double the number of victims of sexual exploitation.

The main reason for the better detection of labour exploitation is the Finnish multiagency approach to detect these crimes. This consists of:

- Victim's low threshold to assistance through the National Assistance System.
- The clearly defined mandate of the Regional State Administration Authority labour inspectors to supervise foreign workforce, prevent grey economy, enforce the laws and report.
- Specialised law enforcement, who have experience in investigating labour exploitation and discrimination.
- NGOs and Labour Unions that offer assistance to victims of labour exploitation and discrimination.

The multiagency approach has been supported by research and study activities on labour exploitation, for instance by the European Institute for Crime Prevention (HEUNI), that have often been funded publicly. The National Rapporteur's studies and report have helped to point out deficiencies in the Finnish anti-trafficking work, for instance the need to broaden the mandate of the labour inspectors to report on suspected human trafficking. In addition, the Finnish legislation criminalises other forms of exploitation, including work discrimination, extortionate work discrimination, aggravated usury which also enforces criminal liability.



GERMANY

GERMANY has increased the efforts to fight against trafficking in human beings and labour exploitation. The new Framework Agreement between the Federal Ministry of Finance, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the German Trade Union Confederation (“Framework Agreement”) has paved the way for joint efforts to enforce workers rights, and to identify and assist victims of exploitation.

Anti-trafficking experts have long highlighted the need for multiagency cooperation to effectively prevent human trafficking and related exploitation. Starting this cooperation, however, is not always easy, as practices and legislation do not always take into account the complex nature of human trafficking as a phenomenon and crime. The obstacles for cooperation can luckily be overcome, of which the budding cooperation between the unit of the financial control of undeclared work (FKS), Fair Mobility and all counselling centers specialized on the enforcement of labour rights for migrant workers, and the Service Centre against Labour Exploitation, Forced Labour and Human Trafficking agreed upon in the Framework Agreement is a prime example.

While the Service Centre against Labour Exploitation, Forced Labour and Human Trafficking, run by ARBEIT UND LEBEN DGB/VHS in Berlin and funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the FKS had already been working together before, the Framework Agreement brought the cooperation to a new level. The cooperation and initiative to the Framework Agreement are tightly connected to the legislative reform in the law that broadened the responsibilities of the FKS in 2019. The FKS had recently received a legal basis to inspect and investigate exploitative conditions of employment, including forced labour and labour exploitation. The main impetus for initiating the cooperation was the limited communication among the FKS and the counselling centres.

The main idea is that the institutions meet regularly on a regional level, exchange contact data of relevant personnel and for instance organize work shadowing.



- We were practically doing the same work with different mandates. As we helped the workers to recover their lost wages, the FKS investigated undeclared work. Both institutions were interested to get information on the same questions, but it was not shared. Moreover, there was a clear synergy for the FKS to be more aware of the work of the counselling centres and the Service Centre against Labour Exploitation so that they could inform the employees about the possibility to seek assistance, Dr. Philipp Schwertmann, Head of Department Migration and Decent Work from NGO Arbeit und Leben, elaborates.

CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR CLOSER COOPERATION

This need for closer cooperation in the end, led to a Framework Agreement between the Federal Ministry of Finance, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the German Trade Union Confederation on cooperation between the FKS and the Fair Mobility and all labour rights counselling centres for foreign workers as well as the Service Centre against Labour Exploitation, Forced Labour and Human Trafficking. The Framework Agreement entered into force in July 2021.

In principle the Framework Agreement levels the ground for the cooperation between the three institutions, in particular the FKS and the counselling centres. The agreement includes possibilities and limits to share information on their procedures, set up and promote regional forms of cooperation. The Framework Agreement furthermore formalizes the case-related cooperation between the stakeholders by confirming the roles of the institutions when labour or social security law has been violated, or when a worker has been exploited. It acknowledges the special rights and needs of people affected by forced labour and human trafficking and builds the bridge to specific regional cooperation on those matters.

- The provisions of the Framework Agreement are in the end quite simple. The main idea is that the institutions meet regularly on a regional level, exchange contact data of relevant personnel and for instance organize

work shadowing. The aim is to initiate common procedures in all the regions of Germany – to level the differences of existing cooperation between the Länder. It was great that the need was noted on a ministerial and political level as they wanted to elevate the Framework Agreement from common agreement between two institutions to a federal level agreement, Dr. Schwertmann describes.

TRAINING FKS TO BETTER DETECT LABOUR EXPLOITATION

A practical result of the Framework Agreement is the appointment of two staff members from each FKS regional unit (main customs office) to work as part-time victim protection coordinators. These coordinators are the ones responsible for setting the cooperation structures in the regions with the counselling centres. As the coordinators need to be equipped to deal with their new responsibilities, they have been trained by the Service Centre against Labour Exploitation, Forced Labour and Human Trafficking.

– During 2022 we have organized four trainings in different regions of Germany with the victim protection coordinators. In 2021 we had one online training. In the trainings we have equipped the coordinators with different tools and checklists about labour and social rights and labour exploitation. The coordinators can then use the information in their agencies and share it forward to their colleagues and the workers they meet. The in-person meetings have also been a great opportunity for the different regional coordinators to meet each other and exchange experiences and information on the topic. This too, will help to accumulate information, Dr. Schwertmann illustrates.

Providing the FKS with knowledge on labour exploitation is important also for trust-building between the FKS officers and the possible victims of exploitation. In addition to the mandate to protect the victims of exploitation, the FKS is authorised to conduct investigations to prevent benefit fraud among foreign workers. Due to the double mandate, the FKS officers can face difficulties as workers do not necessarily know whether the officer wants to assist or punish them.

– The double role is challenging for both the victims and the FKS officers. However, here the relevance of cooperation with the counselling centres shows its value. If the FKS officers face difficulties to build trust during their inspections with the workers, they can inform them about the counselling centres and recommend the workers to reach out to them. With the help of the counselling centre it is more likely that the worker is also willing to cooperate with the FKS. In the case of human trafficking, labour exploitation or forced labour, the FKS has a responsibility to refer the victim to specialized victim assistance entities that are listed in the website of the Service Centre against Labour Exploitation, Dr Schwertmann explains.

What is noticeable already at this point is that thanks to the Framework Agreement, we know that there is a political will to support us in our endeavors.

TESTING THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT IN PRACTICE

Despite being adopted only recently, the Framework Agreement has already improved the cooperation between the counselling centres and the FKS. All the Länder have taken steps to implement the Framework Agreement. Moreover, the awareness of the institutions has increased significantly.

– Five to six years ago, the FKS was like a black box to us. Now we have people that we can work with. As cooperation has been initiated in all regions, next we can focus on collecting experiences of the cooperation on a case level. As we get more practical information, it is easier for us to see what works and what does not work. What is noticeable already at this point is that thanks to the Framework Agreement, we know that there is a political will to support us in our endeavors, Dr. Schwertmann finishes.

RENEWED YOUTH PROTECTION ACT TO BETTER PREVENT CYBER GROOMING AND CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING.

The Second Act Amending the Youth Protection Act (Jugendschutzgesetz) came into force on 1 May 2021. Hereby the legal protection of children and young people from harmful media is modernised and aligned with the digital media reality of children and young people today. The aim of the new legislation is to ensure effective protection of children and young people with regard to digital media.

The legal regulations are supplemented by the new dimension of “interaction-risks”. Internet services, including those not based in Germany, relevant for children and young people are obliged to take appropriate and effective structural precautionary measures for unhindered participation (so-called provider precaution), for example through default settings that protect children and young people in particular from interaction-risks such as bullying, cybergrooming and hate speech. They should ensure, for example, that children and young people can no longer be easily found and approached by strangers when playing games or in social networks, establish a simple, easily accessible and comprehensible help and complaints system for children and offer parents opportunities to monitor their children’s media use in an age-appropriate way.

The former Federal Review Board for Media Harmful to Minors (Bundesprüfstelle für jugendgefährdende Medien – BPjM) is being developed into the “Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media (Bundeszentrale für Kinder- und Jugendmedienschutz – BzKJ) to ensure that the platforms covered by the law - including those based abroad - comply with the above-mentioned systemic precautionary obligations. If deficiencies remain unchanged, the platforms can face fines up to 50 million euros.

The full implementation of the law is still ongoing. In particular, the BzKJ is being successively established and equipped to be able to carry out the far-reaching new and extensive tasks. First large providers already show good approaches and have implemented new precautionary measures in their services.

CREATION OF THE INDEPENDENT NATIONAL REPORTING MECHANISM ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.

In January 2020, the German Federal Government picked up on a general consensus that a national reporting mechanism on trafficking in human beings should be created. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) contracted the German Institute for Human Rights (DIMR) to produce a concrete plan for national reporting mechanisms that address gender specific violence as well as trafficking in persons and thereby add to the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, and the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive (EU/2011/36).

Having completed a first phase of this project, the DIMR recommended two separate reporting mechanisms for 1) the subjects of human trafficking and 2) violence against women and domestic violence, as well as further conceptualisation of data collection and reporting on the phenomenon of human trafficking.

Until autumn 2022, the DIMR is implementing a planning- and trial phase aimed at finalising the concepts and preparing the implementation for two reporting mechanisms. The Federal Government is anticipating that both reporting mechanisms start working as soon as possible. It is important to note that this reporting mechanism is foreseen to be independent, meaning that it will not replace or take up any coordination or reporting responsibilities of the Federal Government or make any other changes to structures or responsibilities within the Federal Government.



GERMANY
OTHER GOOD
PRACTICES



ICELAND



During the last few years, ICELAND has taken steps to develop the national emergency services, 112, to be better suited to assist victims of trafficking in human beings and exploitation. The creation of the 112.is information platform and the trainings of the emergency services personnel on human trafficking have made it easier for victims to find, and be referred to, assistance. 112.is is furthermore playing an important part in the human trafficking national data collection.

During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Icelandic government faced a problem. The mobility restrictions, seen crucial to prevent the spread of the infection, increased the risk of different forms of exploitation and domestic violence, particularly against women and children. The inability for the victims to leave the abusive environment clearly decreased their ability to seek assistance.

The main idea of 112.is is to work as a first point of information. The victim has the possibility to use this platform to get help in the way they are comfortable with.

The awareness on the additional risks for already vulnerable groups encouraged the Icelandic government to rethink its assistance strategies. The response was to create an online information platform 112.is. The platform, published in 2020, provides information on different forms of abuse and violence, including trafficking in human beings.

– According to the evaluation report, drafted as part of the Icelandic National Action Plan against human trafficking, there was an evident need for an information hub on human trafficking. A place where possible victims can find information and seek help. As the 112.is platform already existed and covered other forms of abuse, we thought it a good idea to incorporate human trafficking as part of 112.is. The section on human trafficking was added in June 2021, Hildur Sunna Pálmadóttir, the head of the Icelandic THB Task Force describes.

ONE-STOP SHOP FOR VICTIMS OF EXPLOITATION

The 112.is offers victims of human trafficking various possibilities. Victims can try to self-identify by learning about the phenomenon, related indicators and human trafficking forms, as well as other forms of violence. Concrete case examples have been created in the platform to help this process. The victim, or a person helping the victim, is at any time able to start an anonymous chat with the 112 emergency services to get assistance. Anyone can use the chat function to give anonymous tips about possible human trafficking cases.

– In parallel with the development of the online platform, it was important to raise awareness of the public that 112 can be used to get help in broad variety of circumstances, not only to contact the police. And that it is possible to initiate a contact without giving the emergency services your personal details, Ms. Pálmadóttir explains.

The main idea of 112.is is to work as a first point of information. The victim has the possibility to use this platform to get help in the way they are comfortable with. For this, the platform offers victims several different resources, for instance to contact the Red Cross helpline 1717 or to seek out assistance through the NGOs or public authorities, such as the child protection services. The portal is currently available in three different languages: Icelandic, English and Polish.

AWARE EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL IDENTIFY VICTIMS BETTER

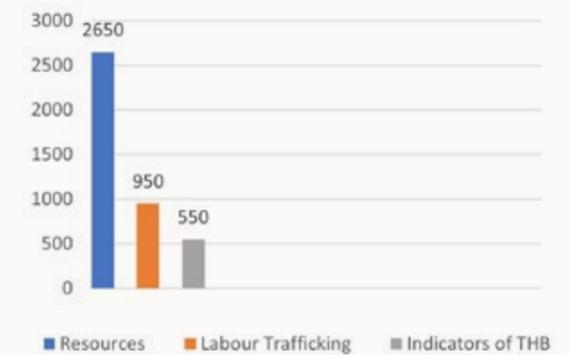
With the new 112.is portal in place, the ability of the 112 emergency services personnel to identify victims of human trafficking needed to be strengthened. During 2021, the emergency services personnel had three training seminars on identification and referral of victims of human trafficking. In parallel to the trainings, a work process for the emergency response personnel was developed.

The victim, or a person helping the victim, is at any time able to start an anonymous chat with the 112 emergency services to get assistance.

The aim of the work process is to further improve the identification of victims, provide tools for evaluation of the needs for immediate assistance and strengthen the know-how of the emergency services personnel so that they are better equipped to give victims information where to seek assistance.

– It is a big step for the victim to call 112. It is therefore important that the emergency response personnel allow the victim to be in control of the situation. According to the working process, the emergency services inform the victim about their suspicions on human trafficking based on the story of the victim. The aim is to make the victim aware of their situation. The emergency services will offer the victim assistance and try to sort out whether they are in acute danger. If the victim is hesitant, they are offered a possibility to call the 112 back later if they wish to do so, Hildur Pálmadóttir ads.

Most visited human trafficking sub-parts in 112.is in 2021-2022 (no. of visits)



GETTING A MORE COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE ON TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN ICELAND

In addition to providing victims of human trafficking a platform with information and access to assistance, the 112 emergency services, and the 112.is, serve a secondary function: data collection. When a suspected victim contacts the 112, general data is collected to better understand the scope of human trafficking phenomenon in Iceland. The data, including for instance the type of exploitation, can be used to make the Icelandic authorities and civil society actors more prepared to prevent human trafficking.

The aim of the data collection is to see where the problems is, what the trends are and where authorities should act.



The 112 emergency personnel have a possibility to share information on human trafficking with a police advisory group. This information, saved in a shared file that the police advisory group has access to, can include anonymous tips on suspected exploitation and data on particular cases – as long as the victim has agreed to cooperate with the law enforcement. If there are grounds for further action, the advisory group can contact a relevant police authority to investigate the situation. Since June 2021, when the human trafficking section in 112.is was published, the information sharing process has been activated five times.

- The aim of the data collection is to see where the problems is, what the trends are and where authorities should act. The GDPR rights of the victims need, naturally, to be taken into consideration. This is one of the reasons why the data collection focuses more on the phenomenon, Hildur Pálmadóttir clarifies.

FURTHER STEPS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 112.IS ALREADY IN PLACE

Despite being in its early stages, 112.is has already been recognized as a useful and important tool to fight different forms of exploitation in Iceland. In the next phase, the platform will be complemented with information on sexual violence. The aim is to make victims of sexual violence more aware of the different stages of a criminal process from the time the crime is reported to the police to how the victim can seek compensation.

- Having the right people involved, covering the point-of-views of different stakeholders and first and foremost making the final product user-friendly are the three things we have learned from the 112.is development process. The lessons learned have helped in legitimizing the 112.is as the central platform to seek help.

ICELAND

OTHER GOOD PRACTICES

NATION-WIDE TRAININGS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In 2021, in accordance with current National Action Plan on Trafficking in Human Beings, Icelandic authorities organised nationwide trainings for different stakeholders on human trafficking. The trainings included:

- Numerous special seminars on the indicators and trends of human trafficking. Few hundred experts from various institutions, from social services to staff of the national airlines, took part in the trainings.
- The Centre for Police Training and Professional Development and the Director of Public Prosecution organised seminars for law enforcement authorities. Police investigators and prosecutors from the other Nordic countries gave their insights on the best practices regarding successful human trafficking investigations.

The strengthened efforts regarding training and education of specialists working in the field has given positive results in Iceland, and, in 2021, lead to first indictment for human trafficking in eleven years. The trainings have further evoked interest in human trafficking related specialisation and training, for instance in the building sector.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

Iceland has a wide group of specialists working on implementing the actions of the Icelandic National Action Plan.

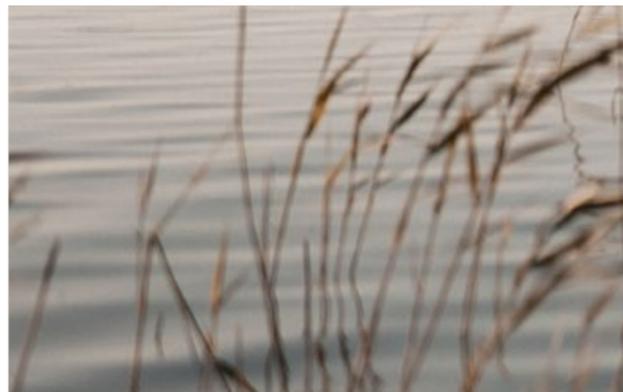
The group is divided into three sub-groups, prevention, protection and prosecution. Each group is lead by a chairman and each group is responsible for implementing certain actions of the action plan. Therefore the implementation of various actions takes place simultaneously by experts in each field. The group of specialists has included for instance a survivor of human trafficking, whose thoughts and ideas have been important for the implementation to be successful.



LATVIA has taken increased measures to address the shadow economy and to better identify human trafficking in the financial sector. The recently published strategic analysis report on human trafficking and associated money laundering aims to improve private sector awareness. Improvements in the reporting of the financial entities can already be detected.

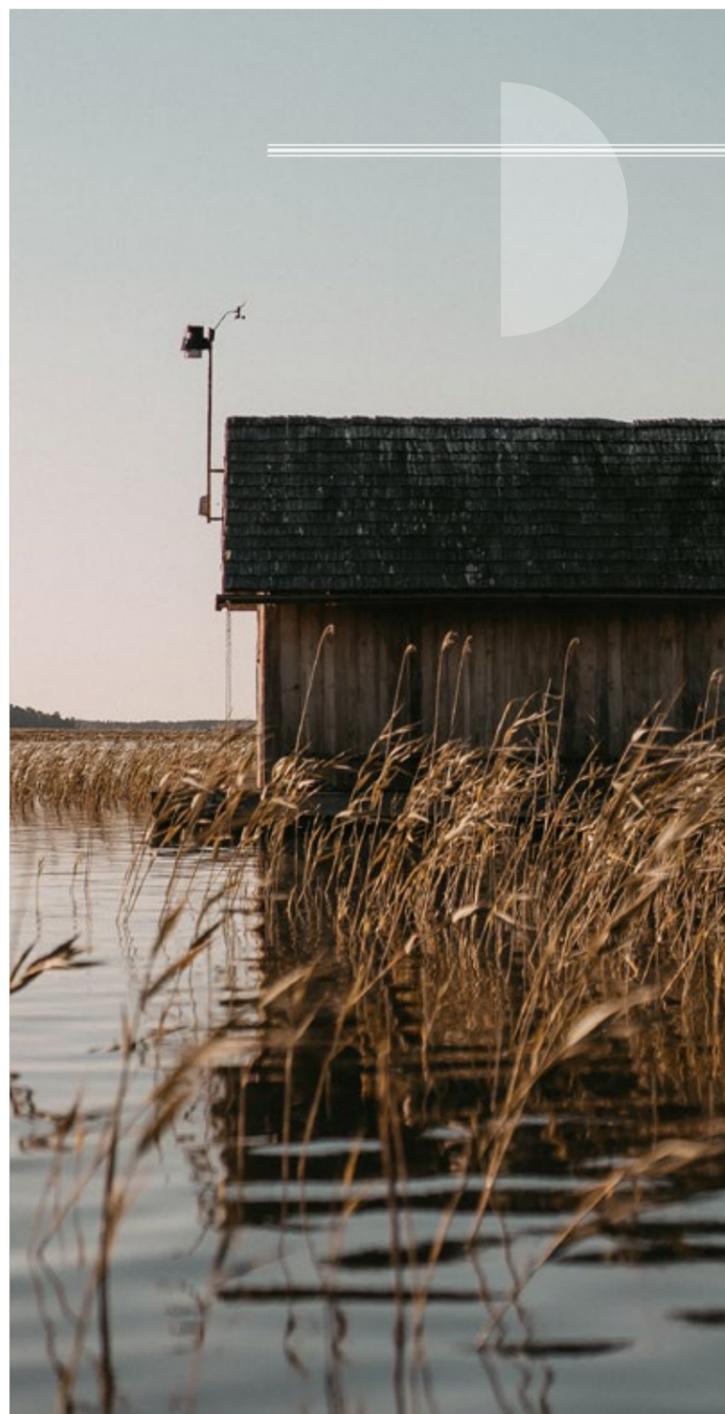
In March 2022, the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of Latvia, in co-operation with the Ministry of the Interior, the Office for Combating Organized Crime of State Police and the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Latvia published a strategic analysis report on human trafficking and associated money laundering. The report, written for the actors of the financial sector, aims to improve the ability of the institutions to identify human trafficking and to report it.

– We had observed that in human trafficking cases the proceeds had been laundered in different ways, often including unregistered transactions. Unlike initially estimated, the actors in the financial sector rarely noticed the laundering in these cases. As the FIU had decided to focus on the shadow economy in 2022, we used this opportunity to educate the financial sector about human trafficking and its red flags. Furthermore, having the support of the United Nations University Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST) initiative helped us to push the topic forward, Matīss Kļaviņš, the Deputy Head of Strategic Analysis Division and Dina Spule, Senior Risk Analyst, Strategic Analysis Division of the FIU Latvia, illustrate.



FINANCIAL SECTOR ENTITIES HAVE THE POSSIBILITY TO FLAG HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In Latvia, the prevention of money laundering involves a set of different actors. Financial entities, including credit institutions, external accountants, independent auditors and real estate agents, are legally obliged to report to the FIU about suspicious transactions. The reporting obligation covers suspicious funds that may have been acquired directly or indirectly as a result of criminal offence or financing of terrorism or proliferation, or an attempt to commit such a transaction.



As long as tools are provided to the obliged private entities, the identification can start from elsewhere and the burden of different proceeding to the victim is not as high.

– Upon providing the suspicious transaction reports (STRs), the obliged entities have a possibility to add an indicator to the report to notify the FIU that the transaction might be linked to human trafficking. However, until 2021 the number of reports that had such indicator has been rather low and the quality of these reports had room for improvement, Matīss Kļaviņš elaborates.

The FIU analyses the reports and views the set indicators. In the course of its analysis, the FIU can remove or add indicators when there are grounds to do so. If enough information is compiled and a crime is detected, the FIU will disseminate the case to law enforcement authorities for possible criminal proceedings. In the event that the information is not sufficient to detect a crime, but the collected data raises concern, the FIU can nevertheless provide the police a risk information report. The police can furthermore ask the FIU to provide such reports if they are investigating a case that involves money laundering.

– The FIU has a mandate to issue an order on the freezing of funds and on transaction monitoring, if there is a justified suspicion that a criminal offence is taking place or has already been committed. The mandate has been used to support human trafficking investigations to make sure that the money does not exit the account before or after the police has arrested the suspects, Matīss Kļaviņš explains.

CLARIFYING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MONEY LAUNDERING FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The prepared strategic analysis report consists of four different sections. The first section focuses on both domestic and international regulatory framework of human trafficking. This is complemented by analysis of the human trafficking trends in Latvia and examples of Latvian case law for forced labour to target the risk profile of human trafficking in the financial sector.

The Financial Intelligence Unit of Latvia

- An independent authority responsible for prevention of money laundering in Latvia
- Main task to collect and analyse financial data, reports or suspicious transactions
- Supports the law enforcement authorities by providing them information to investigate cases of money laundering and financing of terrorism
- Maintains public-private partnership by operating a private and public cooperation coordination group that is tasked in coordinating the activities of public authorities and reporting entities in prevention of money laundering

Source: <https://www.fid.gov.lv/en>.

– The greatest value added of the report comes from discussions with prosecutors and pre-trial investigators. These entities provided us with insights about what the obliged entities could have been able to see from the financial transactions of the past human trafficking cases. Moreover, they gave us important information on human trafficking and money laundering, Matīss Kļaviņš informs.

Already now, we can see more reports from the local credit institutions than before.

The final section of the report introduces the obliged entities to lists of indicators, based on internationally used indicators and the Latvian cases, that can be used to detect human trafficking and subsequent money laundering. The indicators cover both victims and perpetrators. The role of the companies in human trafficking is also emphasized.

– The identification of human trafficking usually starts from the detection of a victim. As long as tools are provided to the obliged entities, the identification can start from elsewhere and the burden of a different proceeding to the victim is not as high, according to Dina Spule.

EXPECTATIONS FOR IMPROVED HUMAN TRAFFICKING REPORTING

The report was initially presented to the representatives of the financial sector entities in February 2022. More outreach activities followed to promote the publication further and its content to the financial sector. Despite the publication being rather new, the dissemination has already borne fruit.

– Already now, we can see more reports from the local credit institutions than before. Financial reports that had flagged human trafficking indicators previously came mainly from money transfer companies, but the suspicions in these reports were often weak. The report has been very timely, since the Russian war in Ukraine has caused rising threats for exploitation of the refugees, ads Matīss Kļaviņš.



Following from the report, the FIU has also discussed with the Latvian police division of human trafficking on how the two institutions could further improve their cooperation.

In addition to making the financial sector entities more aware of human trafficking, the report has raised the awareness of the FIU of the scope of different types of human trafficking and related phenomena. For instance, a deeper understanding of forced criminality – money mules, strawmen in companies – has made it easier to formulate indicators to the financial sector to detect human trafficking.

– Following from the report, the FIU has also discussed with the Latvian police division of human trafficking on how the two institutions could further improve their cooperation. This is highly relevant, since the FIU is the upholder of private-public partnership platform that can be used to discuss important cases, Mr Kļaviņš summarizes.

LATVIA: OTHER GOOD PRACTICES

LAW ON STATE COMPENSATION TO VICTIMS

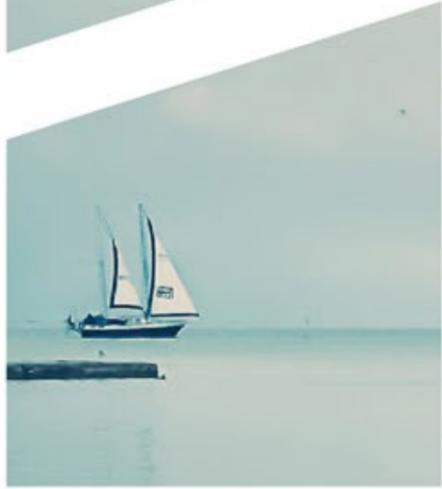
In 2019, Latvian Law on State Compensation to Victims was amended. According to the law, once the person has been formally identified as a victim within the criminal proceeding, the person can apply for the state compensation for victims of crime. The state compensation is a one-off reimbursement of up to 2250 euros. Victims of crime can apply for this compensation by filling out a special template and submitting it to the Legal Support Administration. The person can apply for this compensation already before the court decision during the pre-trial investigation stage or prosecution stage.

The state compensation is not linked to other social allowances or social rehabilitation services that a victim of trafficking in human beings is eligible to receive. For example, if a person is a Latvian citizen, he can receive state compensation as a victim of crime, social rehabilitation programme for victims of trafficking and social allowances (e.g., unemployment support, allowances for vulnerable groups, maternity benefits or other).

CONSULTATION MECHANISM AT THE GENERAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

In 2021, due to reorganization of the Latvian Prosecutors Office, a new consultation mechanism was established at the General Prosecutor's Office. Three prosecutors at the General Prosecutor's Office have been nominated as consulting prosecutors in human trafficking cases. In practice this means that regional prosecutors can contact nominated prosecutors, who have specialized in human trafficking, and ask for expertise and support when necessary. The criminal case can still be coordinated by the regional prosecutors.

This mechanism does not foresee that prosecutors with specialty in THB cases supervise the regional prosecutors. However, the General Prosecutor's Office can initiate a take-over of the case if this is seen necessary.



LIITUWANNA

LITHUANIA has developed a training programme in trafficking in human beings for its consular personnel at diplomatic missions. The programme has improved the ability of the consular staff to identify and assist Lithuanian nationals that have been exploited abroad. The embassies have furthermore been active in disseminating information on human trafficking in Lithuanian communities abroad.

Victims of human trafficking can be exploited within their own country – or abroad, in another country. During 2015–2021 Lithuanian consular personnel identified and assisted in 88 cases of human trafficking involving Lithuanian citizens exploited abroad. In the majority of these cases, Lithuanians were exploited in labour exploitation.

To strengthen the measures to combat human trafficking and to identify potential victims of trafficking not only within the state, but also in foreign countries, the Lithuanian government set new goals for the Lithuanian anti-trafficking work. One outcome is development of a special diplomatic training programme in the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) regarding the protection and assistance of victims of human trafficking.

The improved awareness guarantees that victims of human trafficking identified by consular officers return safely to Lithuania. The identification and assistance opens more opportunities for them to reintegrate into the Lithuanian society.

– The special training programme regarding the protection was initiated in 2008. It is a part of the general consular training intended for Lithuanian diplomats and other officers appointed to consular positions in Lithuanian representations abroad. In recent years the training programme has been expanded. It is now also offered to the consular support staff of Lithuanian diplomatic and consular representations abroad as the consular support staff are often on the frontline when dealing with customers, Erika Griešiuvienė, the Head of Citizens Affairs and

Consular Assistance Division of the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, explains.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE ON ASSISTING LITHUANIAN VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ABROAD

The diplomatic training programme on trafficking in human beings is part of the general consular training. Arranged annually every spring, the programme consist of special lectures on protection and assistance of victims of human trafficking abroad. The lecturers focus on the psychology, behavior, and communication features of victims of human trafficking, new trends in human trafficking, various forms of exploitation and signs of possible human trafficking. Traditionally, speakers from the Lithuanian Criminal Police Office and Lithuanian NGOs, involved in the process of provision of assistance to victims of human trafficking, are invited to the training to share their experience on cooperation between diplomatic missions, NGOs and law enforcement authorities in identifying the victim and providing assistance.

In addition, representatives of the Consular Department of the MFA present to the participants the legal acts regulating the provision of assistance to victims of human trafficking, discuss the procedures of identifying a victim of human trafficking and informing Lithuanian competent authorities and NGOs about a person who may have become a victim of human trafficking. Participants of the training are informed about the scope and possibilities for victim assistance, and conditions for providing non-refundable material aid to victims of human trafficking who want to return to Lithuania.

– The Consular Department of the MFA is responsible for organizing this training course. The size of the training group depends on the number of officers appointed to Lithuanian representations abroad. The number of participants of the diplomatic training programme for the newly appointed diplomats varies between 30–80. The training usually lasts for three hours, Griešiuvienė clarifies.

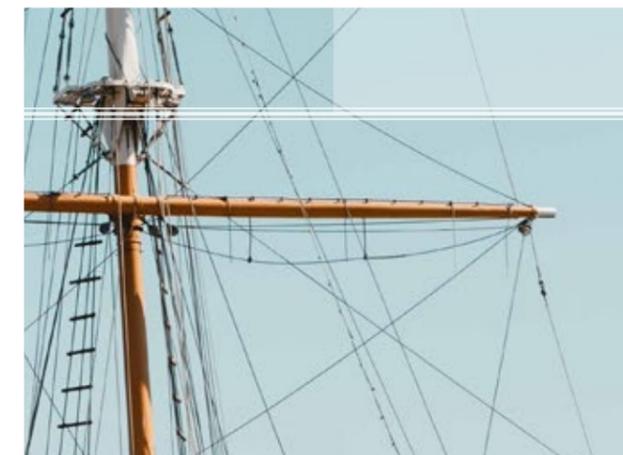
The feedback shows that the programme has been well received and participants have found it useful during their consular assignment to Lithuanian representation abroad.

Special lectures on victim protection are also included in the programme of annual consular meetings organized once a year. About 55 diplomats attend the consular meeting annually.

IMPROVED AWARENESS GUARANTEES THE IDENTIFICATION OF VICTIMS

The Lithuanian embassies' efforts to identify and assist victims of human trafficking have improved after the implementation of the training programme. In 2019-2021 the assistance was provided in 37 cases, most of which were detected in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Based on the training of consular officers and the trends and specifics of human trafficking, a new procedure for the identification of cases of human trafficking was prepared in November 2020 and approved by order of the MFA. It facilitates the identification of victims of human trafficking and specifies the procedure for providing non-refundable material aid to the victims.

– The improved awareness will guarantee that victims of human trafficking identified by consular officers return safely to Lithuania. The identification and assistance opens more opportunities for them to reintegrate into the Lithuanian society.



Due to the trainings, Lithuanian diplomatic missions and consular institutions have likewise been more proactive in sharing information about prevention of human trafficking in Lithuanian communities abroad. According to Erika Griešiuvienė, this includes involving the communities to the information dissemination.

– With the information support of the diplomatic missions, Lithuanian communities abroad have created mobile applications to help victims of human trafficking to get necessary assistance in the respected countries. These applications are called “The Key” and “You are not alone”.

The feedback shows that the programme has been well received.

The training efforts for consular staff have generated increased expertise within the relevant institutions. In 2019 the Lithuanian Embassy in Ireland hosted a workshop for consular officers posted at Lithuanian diplomatic representations in the EU countries, officials of the MFA Consular Department and Irish law enforcement authorities, as well as members of Lithuanian communities abroad and representatives of Lithuanian and local NGOs.

– The goal of the workshop was to share experience in the human trafficking work, discuss methods of cooperation with the members of Lithuanian communities abroad as well as reflect on difficulties when assisting in human trafficking cases, identifying a potential victim of human trafficking and seeking support for a victim, Griešiuvienė elaborates.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lithuanian consular officers, residing in countries where Lithuanian citizens are particularly affected by human trafficking, deepened their knowledge on the topic.

Moreover, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Lithuanian consular officers, residing in countries where Lithuanian citizens are affected by human trafficking, deepened their knowledge on the topic by participating in online events organised by the United States Embassy in Vilnius, and by competent institutions and organisations in Lithuania and other EU countries.

The active engagement of the consular staff, together with the achieved tangible results, is promising not only for the future of the training programme, but will also increase the number of victims assisted.

- We intend to continue with the special training course on protection of victims of THB included as part of general consular training. The feedback shows that the programme has been well received and participants have found it useful during their consular assignment to Lithuanian representation abroad. Naturally, if the legislation or current human trafficking situation changes, the training programme will be maintained or developed accordingly, Griešiuvienė summarizes.

LITHUANIA: OTHER GOOD PRACTICES

PILOT PROJECT OF SPECIALIZED GROUP OF INSPECTORS FOR THE CONTROL AND PREVENTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR FORCED LABOR

In August 2020, to intensify the fight against forced labor, a pilot project of a specialized group of inspectors for the control and prevention of human trafficking for forced labor was established in the Vilnius territorial division of the State labour inspectorate of the Republic of Lithuania (SLI). The main tasks of the group are to analyze identified possible cases of forced labor, collect and systematize information about them and collect evidence and hand it over to the pre-trial investigation institution. The work is done in addition to the other functions of the inspections of the group, the main task being to control undeclared work.

After the establishment of the group, the reporting on human trafficking to police has improved greatly. As previously, the SLI did not detect human trafficking, during 2021-2022, six victims of human trafficking have been identified and reported to the police. In June 2022, another group was established in the Kaunas territorial division.

Pilot groups constantly cooperate with representatives of Centre for Combatting Human Trafficking (KOPŽI), both providing consulting and cooperation regarding the rights of foreigners who may have been violated. During 2021-2022 the pilot groups and KOPŽI met and communicated directly and remotely more than 50 times. In addition to consultations, the groups participated in more than 10 joint inspections based on information from non-governmental institutions, the police, and that received by the SLI.

INCLUDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR JUDGES

From 2020, the topic "Current Issues in Human Trafficking Cases" was included in the training program for judges of courts handling criminal cases of human trafficking. This initiative is one of the measures of the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2020-2022. The trainings were financed from the state budget by funds allocated for the qualification of judges.

The content of the 2021-2022 trainings consisted of the following topics:

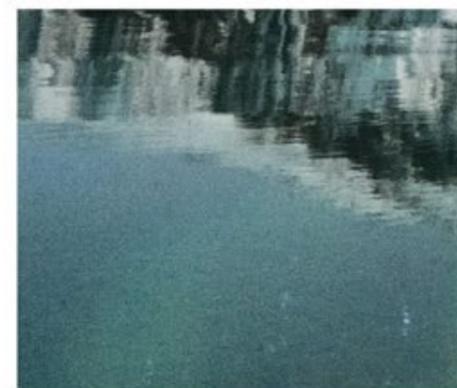
- Features of communication with victims and witnesses in human trafficking cases;
- Actualities and issues of dealing with human trafficking cases;
- Exemption from criminal liability, sentencing and exemption from punishment in the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court of Lithuania;
- Aspects of mutual recognition and enforcement of European Union decisions in criminal cases (legal and practical aspects of mutual recognition measures) etc.

Trainings are carried out on the yearly basis two times a year. In 2020-2021, 46 judges and 49 assistant judges participated in the trainings. 40 professionals plan to participate in the training in November 2022.

The evidence shows that the trainings have likely improved the prevention of human trafficking in Lithuania. In 2021, the courts of first instance of Lithuania 19 human trafficking cases heard and convicted 43 persons. The difference to previous year (2020) is significant: 4 times more cases heard (5 cases in 2020) and 2.5 times more traffickers convicted.



NORWAY



Regional investigation groups on trafficking in human beings (THB) have been in place in all 12 police districts in NORWAY since 2019. Together with the National Expert Group on Trafficking in Human Beings, the regional groups have been able to raise awareness on trafficking in human beings with the Norwegian police. By developing suitable methods to investigate the crime and sharing valuable information and intelligence, the groups have contributed to an improved and more accurate overview of human trafficking in Norway.

Norway has often been used as an example of how pre-trial investigation work in human trafficking cases should be organised. From 2006, as part of the Norwegian government's action plan, the first National Expert Group on Trafficking in Human Beings was established to improve the understanding and knowledge of the human trafficking crime in the Norwegian police. In 2007 the Oslo Police district established the THB/STOP-project with operational investigators. The project lasted until 2012. In 2009, the first regional specialised police test unit was established in Bergen.ⁱ By 2019, regional specialised human trafficking investigation groups could be found in all 12 police districts.

- There was a clear political incentive to make the investigation groups in the police districts more equipped to fight against these types of crimes. With the funding secured, the groups were established, and new positions created. The police prosecutors are an integral part of the investigation groups. Hence, the specialisation did not only cover the police but the prosecutors too, Ann Elisabeth Billa, Police prosecutor 2 from the Innlandet police district, clarifies.

The aim of the expert group and the working groups is highly practical. The emphasis is much on preventing human trafficking and improving the investigative work.

INFORMATION-SHARING ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The National Expert Group consist of two representatives from each of the 12 police districts and public prosecutors, the police directorate, the coordination unit against THB, the intelligence department at the National Criminal Investigation Service (NCIS) and the Norwegian national authority for investigation and prosecution of economic and environmental crime. The National Expert Group, meeting 4-5 times a year online or in-person, functions as a discussion forum the human trafficking related issues that have been identified on the regional level. The National Expert Group can, by using various methods, support law enforcement authorities on the regional level during the investigation phase.

- Within the group we can exchange information on intelligence, human trafficking related investigations and verdicts to improve our understanding and knowledge. From the prosecutor's perspective, as the expert group involves members of police and prosecutors from both the police districts as well as from the regional prosecution offices, the group is a valuable asset to discuss experiences in investigations and court cases. Knowing in advance what has been difficult with human trafficking cases in court and what other challenges have been involved, helps to pay attention to these details in ongoing and future investigations, Ann Elisabeth Billa informs.

The National Expert Group can, when required, set up temporary working groups to facilitate cooperation between law enforcement on the regional and national level. Lately, the working groups have studied the recommendations of an intelligence report on exploitation of seasonal workers in the farming industry and cooperated to update existing lists of indicators on human trafficking.

- The aim of the expert group and the working groups is highly practical. The emphasis is put on preventing human trafficking and improving the investigative work. One example of this work is the creation of a monitoring platform

for prostitution websites, Tove Foss Møller, Police Superintendent from the South-East Police District explains.

To increase the capacity and awareness of the Norwegian police on human trafficking, the national expert group has also engaged in information dissemination activities outside the regional groups. The National Expert Group has for instance produced recorded lectures on human trafficking as a part of the Norwegian Police academy. Furthermore, education programmes have been developed for the staff at the National Police Immigration Service (NPIS).

REGIONAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR INVESTIGATIONS

Even though the National Expert Group has been able to initiate national investigations across the police districts, the main investigative responsibility in human trafficking cases lies within the regional police departments. This feels excessive.

- How the investigation of human trafficking crimes is organised regionally can vary to some extent. In some regions, where more human trafficking cases are detected, the specialised human trafficking investigation group is responsible for leading the investigation. Other units within the department can be asked to assist in investigations where the resources of the specialised human trafficking groups are limited. In other regions, the unit might have more advisory and supporting role. The specialised human trafficking groups can also ask for assistance from the other regional specialised groups. For instance, during action days, other human trafficking groups can be requested to collect information related to the case from their region. This is especially important in cases that cross regional boundaries, Ann Elisabeth Billa and Tove Foss Møller summarize.

As the specialised human trafficking groups can work quite independently, it is important that the people working with the topic are driven and cooperative.

ⁱ GRETA (2022). Evaluation report Norway. Third evaluation round, p. 32.

In addition to the investigative responsibilities, the regional human trafficking units have an important role in raising awareness of their existence within the police departments. The human trafficking units can for example share information on the indicators and good practices on detecting human trafficking that have been developed in the national or regional level.

– Ensuring a well organised investigation, especially in the early investigation phase is important, since both victims and perpetrators might try to leave the country. Telephone surveillance is often a good method to get more information on the events and it lessens the burden of victims. Victim interviews should be limited: to get the picture in the beginning and a more comprehensive one after they have had time to recover. Having several interviews often leads to incoherence in the victims' stories, which can make the case less believable in courts, and revictimize already vulnerable victims, Ms. Billa and Ms. Møller emphasise.

THE NEED FOR GOOD COOPERATION SKILLS

The prevention of human trafficking requires the attention of various stakeholders. Cooperation with the victim's service providers and lawyers and legal counsels is regular. Some specialised human trafficking units have founded working groups with other police units, for instance economic crimes group or the border police, and the Norwegian labour inspectorate A-Krim.

– We have been able to develop good cooperation with several NGOs and women's centres. In addition, the Norwegian tax authority has been a good partner to us in joint actions, Tove Foss Møller informs.

For the investigation, understanding the whole picture of the individual case is important. In international cases, this means that the specialised groups must reach out to other states to better understand victims' and perpetrators' backgrounds, the money trail, timeline of events and the recruitment period. Getting the right information from various stakeholders helps to achieve a better understanding of the exploitation methods.

– International co-operation is like a physical exercise: you have to do it regularly to stay fit to act. As the specialised human trafficking groups can work quite independently, it is important that the people working with the topic are driven and cooperative. Since there are many stakeholders, both national and international to cooperate with, it would be advisable to establish an annual plan on how to share information on national and international co-operation to ensure it is efficient, Ann Elisabeth Billa highlights.

Investigating human trafficking cases often requires a lot of resources, which is why police departments can sometimes be hesitant to initiate investigations. Thus, having budgets enabling the specialised units is crucial.

SPECIALISED GROUPS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO PREVENTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NORWAY

The institutionalisation of the Norwegian National Expert Group and the specialised regional police units have made the Norwegian police and prosecutors more equipped to fight human trafficking. As the awareness of the phenomenon has grown, the police, on a regional and national level, is more able to collect intelligence and remain updated on the latest developments. The complexity of human trafficking as a crime means, however, that the development of methods and activities continues.

– Investigating human trafficking cases often requires a lot of resources, which is why police departments can sometimes be hesitant to initiate investigations. Thus, having budgets that enable the work of the specialised units and make it possible to have enough proactive anti-trafficking specialists is crucial, Ann Elisabeth Billa and Tove Foss Møller conclude.

NORWAY: OTHER GOOD PRACTICES

TRIENNIAL OVERVIEW OF COURT DECISIONS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Coordinating Unit for Victims of Human Trafficking (KOM), National Police Directorate, issues an overview of court decisions on human trafficking, updated three times per year. The publication seeks to respond to the constant demand for knowledge about court cases. It provides:

1. a summary of the most relevant part of the judgements, which gives the reader an easier access to what can be rather complicated readings of court case documents in its full length.
2. an overall overview of the number of convictions since the introduction of the penal provisions on human trafficking in 2003, and
3. a tabular overview of criminal cases with convictions.

The main purpose of the document is to support to KOM's various cooperating partners.

The overview encompasses the following court decisions:

- criminal cases (first, second instance and supreme court decisions)
- court cases in the field of immigration law
- judgments from the European Court of Human Rights, with links to the court's database HUDOC.

Feedback suggests that the overview is useful not only for lawyers across various sectors, but also for others who seek more insight into the field of human trafficking.

LAURA'S HOUSE

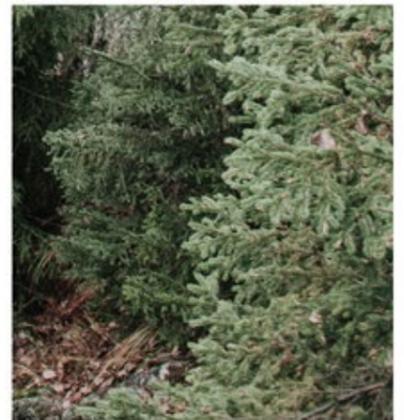
Laura's House is the Church City Mission's shelter for victims and their children. It has existed since 2009 and is the first of its kind in Norway. The shelter is fully financed by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. It has room for nine individuals, plus their children.

Laura's house offers safe apartments and is staffed with social workers 24/7. The project has a strong focus on physical and mental health, especially psychosomatic challenges, and on stabilizing symptoms of trauma. They seek to meet the residents on their own terms and individual needs.

Residents must be identified as victims of human trafficking in Norway. Laura's House provides support and hands on assistance throughout all of these processes, with the goal of maximizing the resident's ability to control their own life situation. Residence time is very individual, and can extend over years.



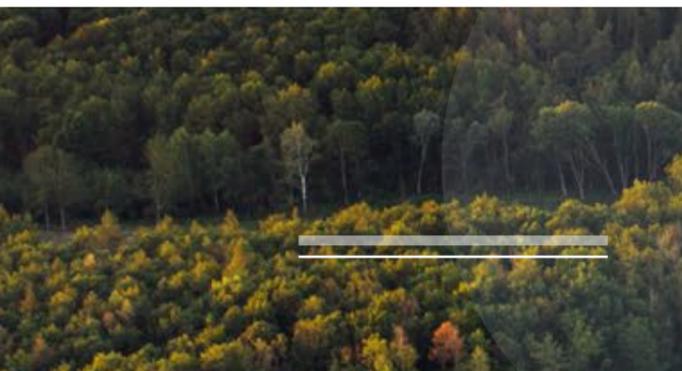
POLAND



POLAND has centralized the assistance of victims of trafficking in human beings to the National Intervention and Consultation Centre for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (KCIK). By offering victims individual assistance, the KCIK has been able to help both domestic and foreign victims in Poland. KCIK's flexible working methods and cooperation with different stakeholders have facilitated the victims' access to justice and increased the awareness on human trafficking in Poland.

The NGO La Strada Foundation Against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery began to work with victims of human trafficking in Poland 27 years ago, in 1995. At the early stages of the work, La Strada concentrated on maintaining a hotline for possible victims. As the demand for services grew, the anti-trafficking work of La Strada, with the financial support from the European Union, developed. In 2009, as it had become increasingly evident to the NGOs that the Polish state should assume additional responsibility in organising the services for victims of trafficking, La Strada proposed the idea of a national centre. The initiative gave rise to the current Polish National Intervention and Consultation Centre for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (KCIK).

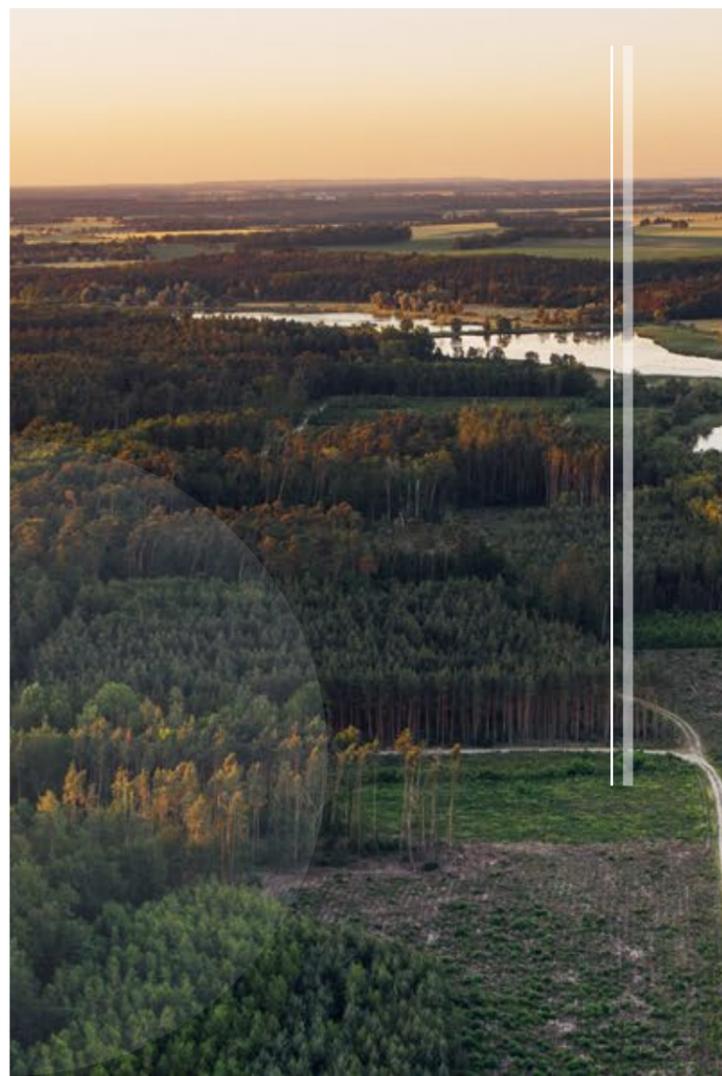
– After the state took the initiative, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration organized a procurement competition. La Strada won the competition and has been responsible for the consultation centre ever since. The services are available for all victims of human trafficking in Poland, Irena Dawid-Olczyk, President of La Strada Poland and the Head of the Consultation Centre explains.



RIGHT TO INFORMATION, RIGHT TO JUSTICE

The access of victims of trafficking to services in Poland starts from a referral. The KCIK is running a 24-hour helpline for victims, and witnesses of human trafficking that can be used to call for support. Besides the helpline, victims can contact the KCIK through email, Facebook or WhatsApp. Pre-trial investigation units, the Polish police and the border guard, can also refer presumed victims to the KCIK. Of late, the majority of the victims referred to the KCIK have originated from other countries than Poland. The last two years have seen a large increase in the number of victims originating from South American countries.

The provision of services needs to be thought holistically. If nothing is done to help the victims when they are identified, or later during their possible life crisis situations, it is more than likely that they will be revictimized.



– When the presumed victim is referred to us, we will start from pre-identification. During this phase, the victim is asked whether they are ready to work with the law enforcement agencies to facilitate criminal proceedings. After the initial discussion with the presumed victim, the KCIK organizes a staff meeting to discuss and decide whether the presumed victim of trafficking is identified. If the identification is done, the services start immediately. The same method is used for all victims, including to those staying in the country irregularly, Dawid-Olczyk describes.

As the national consultation centre, the KCIK is responsible for providing services to presumed victims of human trafficking. The victim is appointed a case manager, who assesses the victim's needs. In practice, the services can include provision of basic life needs, for example food and safe accommodation, access to medical care, crisis intervention services and support in contacting a lawyer, if the victim is ready to take their case forward and work with the law enforcement.

Depending on the victim's desire to stay in Poland, the KCIK can either help the victim to look for a job, language courses or a place for education, or assist the victim with a safe return. As the services do not include direct financial assistance to victims, many victims staying in Poland want to find employment as soon as possible. By assisting them to find work, the KCIK is trying to avoid situations where the victims try to employ themselves at any means necessary and end up being exploited.

– In principle, the services aim to make victims more aware of their rights. The victims are able to receive adequate help from the KCIK and we put a lot of energy in providing them with the basic necessities. In our services, we are trying to take into consideration cultural differences, as the victims might have dietary restrictions or cultural practices that need to be respected. In the end, however, right to justice and information are the most important goals of assistance, Irena Dawid-Olczyk describes.



FROM CRISIS INTERVENTION TO LONG-TERM SUPPORT

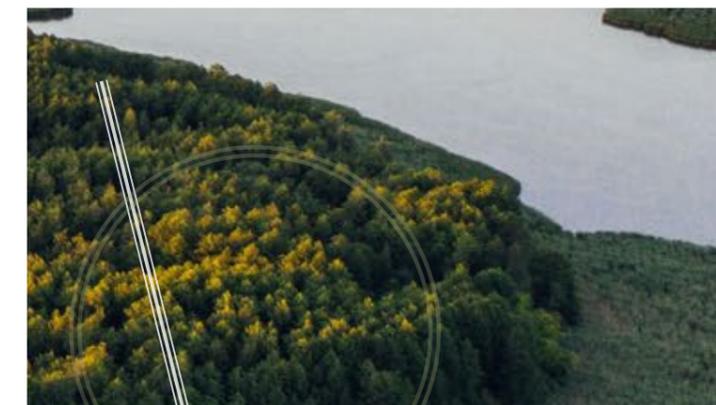
The needs of individual victims can vary significantly. Mainly, the services to victims last for 3-6 months, called an intervention period. During that time the victims are worked intensely with to support their independence and minimize the possibility of revictimization

Due to the nature of the human trafficking phenomenon, it is important to think long-term. Organizing assistance is not a one-year project but requires time and flexibility.

– We will usually agree on a verbal agreement with the victim about the length of services, starting from one month. The KCIK has a team meeting every week to discuss the cases, during which it is possible to evaluate the victim's further need of services.

Despite the emphasis of the services being in the intervention period, the services can continue for a longer time. Receiving a residence permit or cooperating in criminal proceedings, can prolong the duration of services. The services can be extended for other individual reasons, for example due to drug addiction or if the victim lacks housing alternatives and is homeless.

It is possible that victims that have previously been assisted from the KCIK are in need of assistance repeatedly due to acute life crisis situations. In one case, the victim received services from the KCIK 16 years after the initial intervention, as the perpetrator was caught, and a criminal process initiated.



- The provision of services needs to be elaborated holistically. If nothing is done to help the victims when they are identified, or later during possible life crisis situations, it is more than likely that they will be revictimised. Certain flexibility is needed. For instance, during the pandemic we allowed the women that were accommodated in the shelter to stay there for a longer period of time, Irena Dawid-Olczyk illustrates.

MULTIAGENCY COOPERATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE VICTIMS

Apart from the provision of services, the KCIK functions as an expert body in victim assistance. The KCIK is part of a special working group on human trafficking in the Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration together with other institutions, such as the national police, border guard or the prosecutor's office. The working group can be used to discuss the structural issues in anti-trafficking work. In addition, the KCIK has engaged in bilateral cooperation with the law enforcement agencies.

- The bilateral cooperation is intensified in concrete cases. The perpetrators can scare the victims into believing that the law enforcement authorities want to force the victims to return to their home countries. To facilitate the cooperation of victims and the law enforcement, the KCIK can organize space for the victim testimonies in the centre's premises, where they feel more comfortable.

Cooperation with different agencies offers a chance to increase the visibility of the KCIK but also offer tools for stakeholders to prevent human trafficking and assist victims.



Through the victim assistance expert role, KCIK provides the law enforcement authorities trainings on human trafficking and identification of victims. Furthermore, the KCIK disseminates information to other stakeholders, such as Polish and foreign embassies, NGOs and the media, to get the consultation centre known, improve cooperation with other actors and to provide victims with various means to contact the centre.

- Cooperation with different agencies offers a chance to increase the visibility of the KCIK and gives tools for stakeholders to prevent human trafficking. The centre can organize trainings and we can be contacted by other agencies. Recently, representatives of media have reached out to us to share our contact details in public for refugees escaping the Russian war in Ukraine, Irena Dawid-Olczyk informs.

FLEXIBLE LONG-TERM APPROACH KEY TO SUCCESS

The KCIK has been operating with victims of human trafficking for 14 years. During those years, the knowledge on the human trafficking phenomenon has increased. At the same time, the new elements of this crime, for instance online exploitation, have made it more complicated to help victims of human trafficking.

- Due to the nature of the human trafficking phenomenon, it is important to think long-term. Organizing assistance is not a one-year project but requires time and flexibility. Three years ago, we did not know that at this point we would have so many Spanish speakers to assist. Nor that the Russian war in Ukraine would change the security environment and force us to change our priorities. In long-term project one is more able to have the best people involved that also understand the importance of flexibility in this human rights work, Irena Dawid-Olczyk concludes.

THE REGIONAL VOIVODESHIP TEAMS

The Polish system for combating trafficking in human beings includes 16 regional Voivodeship Teams for Counteracting Trafficking in Human Beings. These teams operate in the field based on orders issued by individual voivodes (provinces).

Voivodeship Teams are primarily composed of representatives of voivodeship offices, the Police, Border Guard, prosecutor's office, labour inspection, labour offices, local governments, school superintendents, educational institutions, and non-governmental organisations. The teams provide support to victims within the social assistance system, as well as carry out prevention activities through information campaigns on human trafficking and dissemination of knowledge among, for instance, the youth, teachers, and entrepreneurs in their regions. Moreover, they can make proposals, suggestions, and comments on how to increase the effectiveness of actions and solve problems in counteracting human trafficking in the Voivodeship and organise trainings to law enforcement agencies, representatives of the judiciary, and for persons professionally involved in providing assistance to victims of human trafficking.

The Voivodeship teams have contributed to better coordination of the work of different institutions and facilitated the ongoing information exchange.

MANUAL FOR EMPLOYERS ON HOW TO IDENTIFY VICTIMS AND PREVENT FORCED LABOUR IN BUSINESSES AND SUPPLY CHAINS

An inter-agency advisory body within the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy published a manual in October 2020 for employers on how to identify victims and prevent forced labour in businesses and supply chains. The manual, "Forced labour - how to recognise and prevent it", is aimed at businesses, public institutions, public administrations, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, as well as other entities that use human labour and would like to consciously ensure respect for human rights.

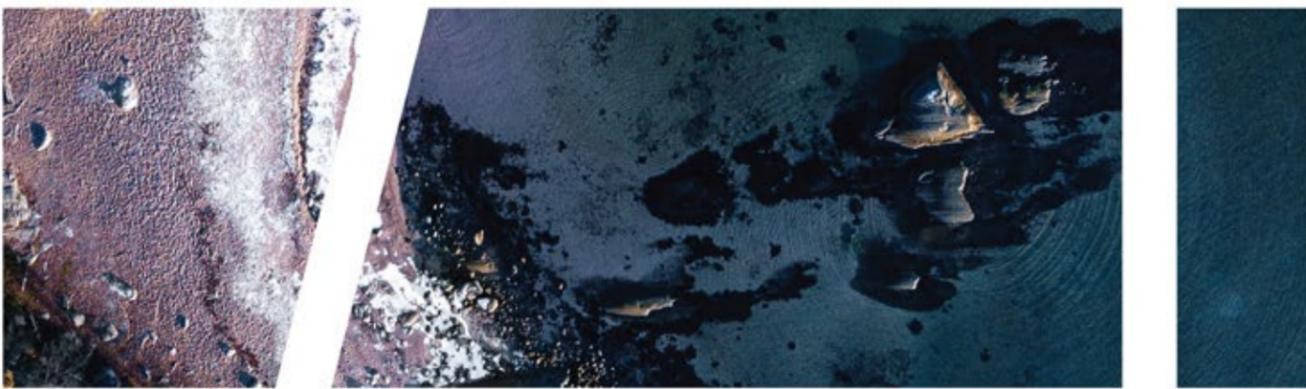
The guide provides tools to identify and minimise the risk of forced labour. They have been developed based on legislation and the good practices in the market. The tools are divided to four parts:

1. Plan: policy against forced labour, initial risk assessment, guidance for employers using external forms of employment, checklists (e.g. obligations of temporary employment agencies or risk assessment of cooperation with an employment agency, etc.).
2. Do: contractual clauses, information leaflets.
3. Check: forced labour questionnaire for those providing labour, audits and other means of obtaining information on potential violations of the prohibition on forced labour.
4. Act: improvement actions - remediation plan, information on what to do (where to report) in cases where forced labour may have occurred.

The tools are designed to be easily used and modified to suit the needs of the company. The manual includes questionnaires employers can use to identify potential victims.



SWEDEN



SWEDEN is one of the few countries in the world that has appointed an Ambassador-at-large for combatting trafficking in human beings. Representing Sweden internationally, the ambassador has been focusing on highlighting prevention, victim protection and human rights internationally. By sharing experiences around the world on best practices from the Swedish anti-trafficking work, the ambassador also supports the Swedish national anti-trafficking work.

Fighting human trafficking can be a priority in foreign policy, which Sweden has proved in practice. For eight consecutive years, Sweden has appointed an Ambassador-at-large for combatting trafficking in persons to support both international and national anti-trafficking work. One of the formulated objectives is to ensure that the rights of the victims are respected and to remind other countries about their responsibilities to counter human trafficking in all its forms.

- Ministries of foreign affairs can assign special envoys for areas of high political interest. In Sweden, the Ambassador-at-large for combatting trafficking in persons was first introduced in 2008. Since the implementation of the Swedish feminist foreign policy in 2016, the position has been an integral part of the anti-trafficking policy work, Anna Ekstedt, Ambassador-at-large for combatting trafficking in persons.



HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING WORK IN AN INTERNATIONAL SETTING

The main added value of the ambassador function comes from the close cooperation the Ambassador has with international and regional organizations, such as the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the institutions of the European Union (EU) and the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The cooperation relates to direct anti-trafficking cooperation, or cooperation on closely related phenomena, such as gender-based violence or human rights.

- Human trafficking is a broad phenomenon that is linked at minimum to organized crime, gender equality issues, human rights, labour rights, migration, child protection issues, and to health and sexual reproduction. Because the scope of human trafficking is so broad, it can sometimes be forgotten in the policymaking and strategic discussions. It is the duty of the Ambassador to ensure that the work against human trafficking and the protection of victims is placed high on the international political agenda, Amb. Ekstedt confirms.

In practice, the ambassador can provide input to international political documents and strategies. By meeting different stakeholders, the ambassador has access to updated information on the topic, which can enhance the knowledge of both the Swedish national institutions and the

international partners and institutions that the ambassador cooperates with.

The cooperation can extend from organizing events to publishing information and facilitating training of various experts. One such publication is the upcoming revision of the CBSS Handbook for Embassies and Diplomatic Missions on How to Assist and Protect Victims of Human Trafficking which will be published during 2022.

- The interchange of ideas proliferates effective learning about the many sides of human trafficking and the preventive practices. By exchanging knowledge, I have the possibility to transmit the Swedish know-how abroad but also convey the international practices to the national level, informs Ambassador Anna Ekstedt.

As part of her mandate, the ambassador supports the Swedish embassies all over the world in promoting Swedish foreign policy interests, in this case prevention of human trafficking and the protection of victims.

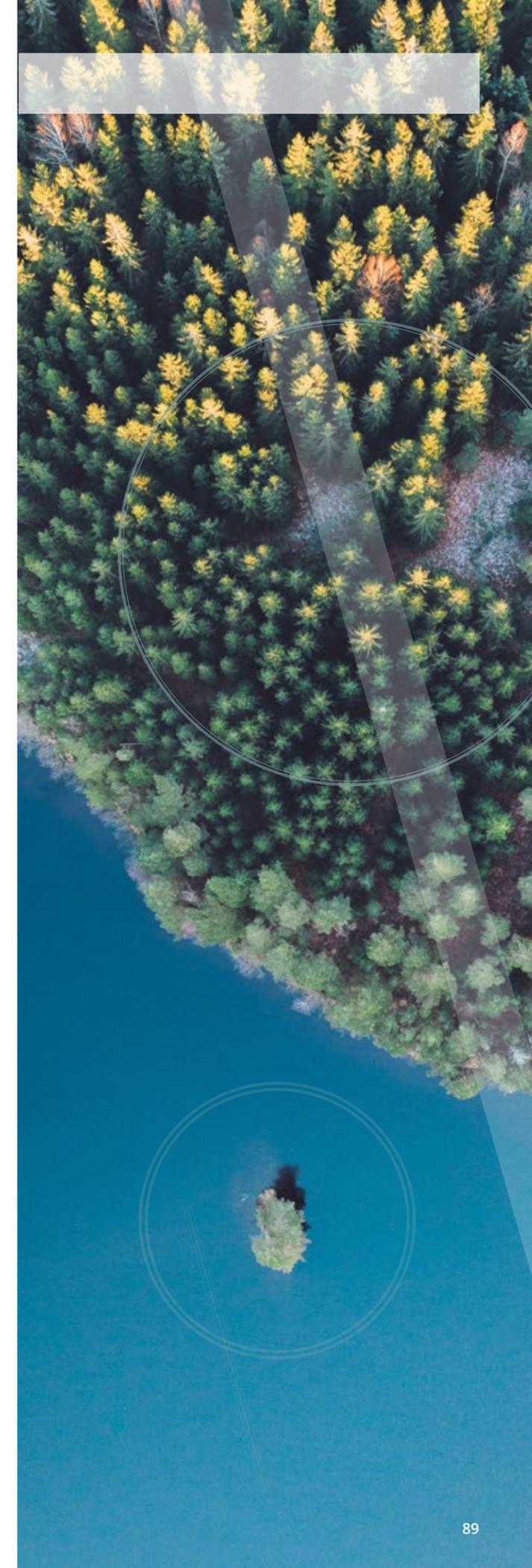
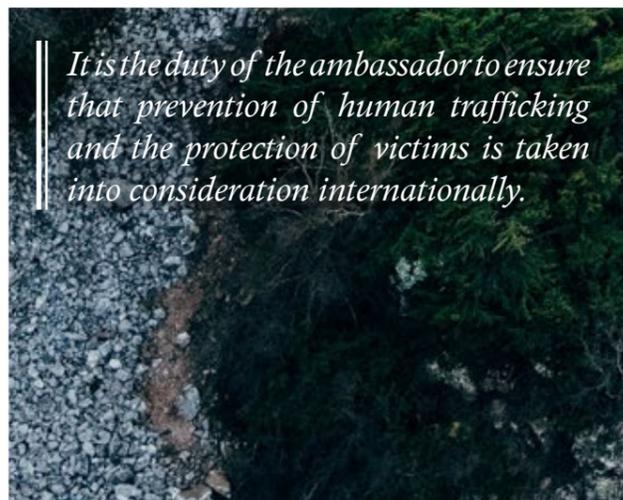
The Ambassador function can to a certain extent facilitate financing of international actors working in counter-trafficking. Moreover, by strategically working with selected NGOs, the ambassador can better promote Swedish anti-trafficking policies globally.

DEMAND DISRUPTION IS ABOUT THE RIGHT NOT TO BE SEXUALLY EXPLOITED

The Swedish anti-trafficking work has a strong emphasis on disrupting the demand fostering human trafficking, especially for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The Swedish national legislation specifically targets demand for sexual services, by criminalising the purchase of sexual services in Sweden. The approach of highlighting demand in the context of sexual exploitation has resulted in international interest, hence putting the topic high on the Ambassador's agenda.

- All the UN countries have an obligation to address demand. The Swedish model is one way of addressing this. The idea is to share the

It is the duty of the ambassador to ensure that prevention of human trafficking and the protection of victims is taken into consideration internationally.



Swedish experiences and best practices. This includes discussions with the countries that do not necessarily have the same legislation in place, Ambassador Anna Ekstedt continues.

In recent years the issue of demand has been discussed increasingly on the international level. Different UN agencies and the OSCE are paying attention to the issue and exploring how demand could be better disrupted. The importance of disrupting the demand is also discussed nationally in other countries. Some countries, such as France, have already adapted similar legislation.

- France and Sweden are working very closely together and implementing a joint diplomacy against human trafficking. As France too has an Ambassador-at-large for combatting trafficking in persons, it is easy to organize joint events and promote the topic together. Legislative developments are taking place in other countries too.

SUPPORTING THE SWEDISH INSTITUTIONS BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

As a part of her mandate, the Ambassador supports the Swedish embassies all over the world in promoting Swedish foreign policy interests, in this case the prevention of human trafficking and the protection of victims. In practice, the Ambassador can for example help the embassies to organise thematic events. By utilizing her international network, the Ambassador is able to connect the Swedish embassies with relevant stakeholders in the country of their station.

- The embassies can consult the ambassador-at-large in any policy related issues that concern human trafficking. Possible individual human trafficking cases are handled by the consular and visa departments and the ambassador has no mandate in assisting with them, Ambassador Anna Ekstedt adds.

At the national level, the ambassador is regularly meeting the national coordinator structure, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency and other relevant actors to exchange information on the developments at the international level, such as the revision of EU Anti-Trafficking Directive.

CONNECTING THE ANTI-TRAFFICKING WORK TO BROADER ISSUES

The Ambassador-at-large for combatting trafficking in persons is a thematic special representative. As such the position is susceptible to policy change. Simultaneously, major international events, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian war in Ukraine, have put human trafficking higher on the international political agenda, which highlights the need for countries to cooperate across borders and between international and regional institutions. In this cooperation, the function and role of the Ambassador-at-large could make a significant difference.

All the UN countries have an obligation to address demand. The Swedish model is one way of addressing this.

- Having the human trafficking perspective present in foreign policies, and within a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, can help seeing the connection this crime has to broader issues. Human trafficking is a very international issue, that can at the same time be very stuck in the national settings. A link between diplomatic dialogues, international cooperation and national exchange benefits the overall anti-trafficking work, Ambassador Anna Ekstedt concludes.



REGIONAL COORDINATORS

In Sweden the social services in the municipalities have the ultimate responsibility to assist exploited persons identified within the municipal borders. However, due to a lack of competence, resources, and specialization, the social services are not always able to offer the adequate assistance required to victims of human trafficking. In order to mitigate the challenges in assisting presumed victims of human trafficking in Swedish municipalities, Sweden has for the last eight years applied the effective function of the *Regional Coordinator*.

The Regional Coordinator is a practitioner from the social services, assigned to work full-time with coordinating victim assistance within and between the municipalities in a designated Swedish region. The Coordinator is a person with spear-head anti-trafficking competence that local authorities can contact and cooperate with in direct cases of human trafficking for all forms of exploitation. This can entail training other professionals, conducting risk and health assessments, assisting and referring victims to the appropriate help services, participate in multi-disciplinary inspections at work sites and support the victim during criminal proceedings.

The Regional Coordinator is a function considered to be one of the best practices in Sweden when it comes to anti-trafficking work and to ensure institutional responsibility when it comes to victim assistance and protection. The function of the Regional Coordinator is funded, and sometimes co-funded, by local and regional authorities jointly.

SAFE HAVENS

The Salvation Army's Trafficking Center Safe Havens in Stockholm meets presumed victims of human trafficking and offers them legal and social support. The objective of the Safe Havens is to give victims increased knowledge about their rights and assist them getting access to them. The center is open for men, women and children that have experienced any form of exploitation.

Two law firms specialized in criminal and asylum law collaborate with Safe Havens. The presumed victims also get a trained volunteer as a legal buddy that will assist them with their case. The Safe Havens have a clear victim-centered approach with the ultimate objective being reparation and preventing revictimisation.

The Salvation Army in Sweden also runs safe houses and outreach programs for victims of human trafficking.

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